



People Technology Data. Action.

HEALTHIER IS HERE

At Optum, Healthier goes way beyond a feeling. Quite simply, it's our passion and our purpose. As a health services and innovation company, we power modern health care by combining data and analytics with technology and expertise. Our insights quickly lead to better outcomes for hospitals, doctors, pharmacies, health plans, governments, employers and the millions of lives they touch. Which, come to think of it, is a pretty good feeling as well.

optum.com

NEW YÖRKER SUMMER FICTION:

SECRET HISTORIES

JUNE 8 & 15, 2015

9 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

31 THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Amy Davidson on a journalist's trial in Iran; Harper Lee; the Grateful Dead; Elise Engler; James Surowiecki on the big bubble in China.

ZADIE SMITH 38 "ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK" **JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER** 45 "LOVE IS BLIND AND DEAF" **ANTHONY LANE** 48 GO ASK ALICE Lewis Carroll and Wonderland. "QUAESTIO DE CENTAURIS" **PRIMO LEVI** 56 "THE REPUBLIC OF BAD TASTE" JONATHAN FRANZEN 62 NICOLA LO CALZO 84 A portfolio. "THE PROSPECTORS" **KAREN RUSSELL** 90

TIME TRAVEL

LOUISE ERDRICH 46 THE COURSE OF HAPPINESS

DANIYAL MUEENUDDIN 55 LOST LUGGAGE

REBECCA CURTIS 61 MORLOCKS AND ELOI

THOMAS MCGUANE 69 FALL RIVER

SAM LIPSYTE 83 PACKAGE TOUR

THE CRITICS

POLITICS AND LITERATURE

ROBYN CRESWELL AND 102 Understanding jihadis through their poetry.
BERNARD HAYKEL

BOOKS
109 Briefly Noted

_..__.

ON TELEVISION

EMILY NUSSBAUM 110 "Cucumber," "Banana."

THE CURRENT CINEMA

ANTHONY LANE 112 "Love & Mercy," "San Andreas."

POEMS

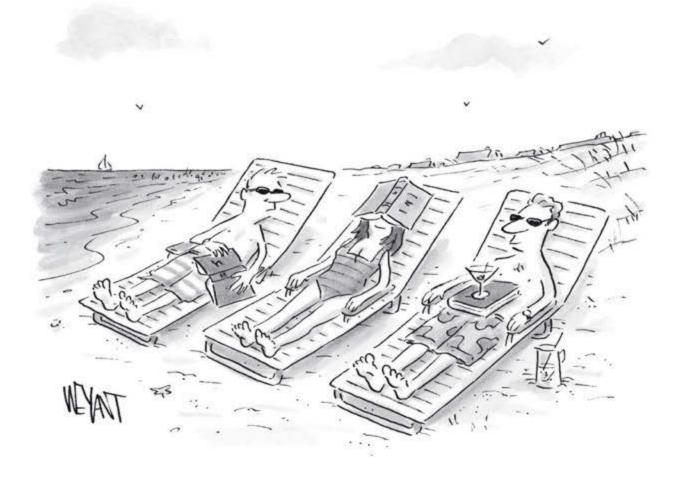
BENJAMIN LANDRY 42 "African Grey"
ADAM FITZGERALD 72 "The Lordly Hudson"

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

COVER "Summer Sky"

DRAWINGS Christopher Weyant, Roz Chast, Michael Maslin, Jacob Samuel, Sam Gross, P. C. Vey, Benjamin Schwartz, William Haefeli, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Edward Steed, Tom Cheney, Paul Noth, Corey Pandolph, Liana Finck, Jason Adam Katzenstein, Avi Steinberg, Michael Crawford, Pat Byrnes, Edward Koren, Barbara Smaller, Frank Cotham SPOTS Luci Gutiérrez

SUMMER READING GROUP





Over 20 million kids in America lack access to healthy food. So, a company called Revolution Foods came up with a solution: affordable, nutritious, kid-inspired meals, available in schools and stores.

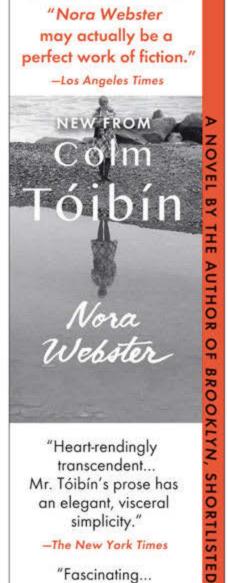
To make an impact, they needed capital, financial advice and guidance. With Citi's support, they went from a small kitchen to employing more than 1,000 people, serving a million meals a week nationwide. Now Citi is helping the company expand, as they continue their mission to make nourishing food accessible to all.

For over 200 years, Citi's job has been to believe in people and to help make their ideas a reality.

citi.com/progress







NOW IN PAPERBACK

"Heart-rendingly transcendent... Mr. Tóibín's prose has an elegant, visceral simplicity."

-The New York Times

"Fascinating... Revelatory... A masterful and unforgettable novel."

-NPR

"Miraculous...a strikingly restrained novel about a woman awakening from grief and discovering her own space, her own will...extraordinary."

-The Washington Post

Ebook and audiobook editions also available.



SimonandSchuster.com

CONTRIBUTORS

PRIMO LEVI ("QUAESTIO DE CENTAURIS," P. 56), who died in 1987, wrote memoirs, poetry, essays, and works of fiction. "The Complete Works of Primo Levi," a threevolume collection of all fourteen of Levi's books, will be published in September.

ZADIE SMITH ("ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK," P. 38) is the author of, most recently, "NW."

THOMAS MCGUANE ("FALL RIVER," P. 69) published "Crow Fair," a book of short stories, in March.

JONATHAN FRANZEN ("THE REPUBLIC OF BAD TASTE." P. 62) has written for the magazine since 1994. "Purity," his fifth novel, comes out in September.

REBECCA CURTIS ("MORLOCKS AND ELOI," P. 61) is the author of the story collection "Twenty Grand and Other Tales of Love and Money."

JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER ("LOVE IS BLIND AND DEAF," P. 45) is working on his next novel, forthcoming in 2016.

LOUISE ERDRICH ("THE COURSE OF HAPPINESS," P. 46) won a 2012 National Book Award for her novel "The Round House."

SAM LIPSYTE ("PACKAGE TOUR," P. 83) has written three novels and two short-story collections, the most recent of which is "The Fun Parts."

KAREN RUSSELL ("THE PROSPECTORS," P. 90), a 2013 MacArthur Fellow, has published four books, including the novel "Swamplandia!"

DANIYAL MUEENUDDIN ("LOST LUGGAGE," P. 55) is the author of "In Other Rooms, Other Wonders."

SARA CWYNAR (PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS, PP. 38, 56, 62, 90), an artist and a graphic designer, is an M.F.A. candidate in photography at Yale.

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN (COVER) published "The Potato King" in April. A solo exhibition of his work opens at the Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna next month.

NEWYORKER.COM EVERYTHING IN THE MAGAZINE, AND MORE THAN FIFTEEN ORIGINAL STORIES A DAY.

ALSO:

FOR

THE BOOKER PRIZE

SUMMER FICTION ISSUE: Zadie Smith and Karen Russell read their stories. Plus, the Fiction Podcast, with Deborah Treisman and Michael Cunningham.

DAILY COMMENT / CULTURAL COMMENT:

Opinions and reflections by Jelani Cobb, Rebecca Mead, and others.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Additional pictures from Nicola Lo Calzo's "Obia." Plus, a journey down every block of Broadway: art work by Elise Engler. **NEWYORKER.COM/PODCAST:** Our new

hub for New Yorker podcasts. This week, on the Political Scene, Jelani Cobb and John Cassidy talk with Dorothy Wickenden about race relations and policing in America after the death of Freddie Gray.

VIDEO: A look at the poems written and performed by jihadi militants fighting for ISIS. Plus, a new episode of "Comma Queen," with Mary Norris.

SUBSCRIBERS: Get access to our magazine app for tablets and smartphones at the App Store, Amazon.com, or Google Play. (Access varies by location and device.)

THE MAIL

SAFE GROUND

Sarah Stillman's moving article on the dangers faced by unaccompanied children from Central America crossing into the United States touches on immigration court, but that is only one in a series of bureaucratic hurdles. ("Where Are the Children?," April 27th). I am an attorney for Casa de Esperanza, a nonprofit organization that provides legal, educational, and social services to more than three hundred children and about a hundred of their family members. Children entering the country must pass through a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Asylum Office, where some are granted asylum but others—who face beatings, rape, or death in their home country—are denied for arcane reasons. In immigration court, judges are bound by out-of-date policies, which take a narrow interpretation of the law of asylum. My colleagues, and people at other agencies that represent children seeking security and opportunity in America, encounter overwhelming odds against our clients. Circuit courts, much to their credit, have carved out ways of interpreting the law to support children, as well as women fleeing domestic violence. These people deserve protection.

Joyce Antila Phipps Executive Director, Casa de Esperanza Plainfield, N.J.

TOASTING TROLLOPE

I was happy to read Adam Gopnik's piece on Anthony Trollope ("Trollope Trending," May 4th). Trollope has long been invidiously compared with Charles Dickens, and he has finally received the tribute that he deserves. I've been a Trollope reader for years and, even more, a Trollope re-reader. Gopnik provides a fine analysis of Trollope's insight into the political and clerical concerns of his day, and he is right that Trollope's strength is his depiction of characters. I find that this is especially true of the female characters. Whereas Dickens's heroines are usually angelic or mischie-

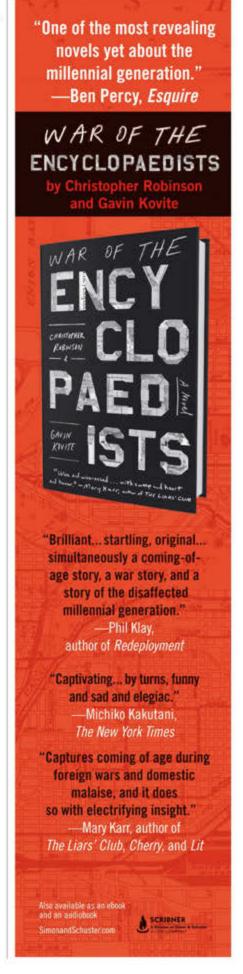
vous young girls, Trollope is masterful in his portrayal of women as strong and complex individuals. Lady Glencora M'Cluskie, from the Palliser series, is unforgettable. But I have to disagree with Gopnik's claim that "Trollope is not a sentence-by-sentence writer"; on the first page of every one of his books, I have written page numbers of sentences that I don't want to forget. One of my favorites, from "Doctor Thorne," on the habit of drinking: "Habit is a second nature, man; and a stronger nature than the first."

Elmera Goldberg New York City

As the author and the co-editor of two books that Gopnik mentions, I was glad to read a piece reflecting that Trollope stands the test of time. He is as relevant today on gender, race, and politics as he was in his own era. Still, I have never taught a student who has read a Trollope novel before taking my class. Many students are thrilled to discover a writer with whom few Americans are familiar. Over the years, I have come to appreciate his work more and more, thanks to scholars such as Robert Polhemus ("The Changing World of Anthony Trollope") and James Kincaid ("The Novels of Anthony Trollope"). Academic literature helps students see Trollope as writing not only about Victorian England but also about their own lives—about psychology, the environment, the political nature of all relationships, the comedy of human foibles—and about the need for faith in something, usually the love of one individual for another.

Deborah Denenholz Morse Vera W. Barkley Professor of English The College of William and Mary Williamsburg, Va.

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. We regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter or return letters.



SUMMER FRIDAY STORIES

ESCAPE THE CITY IN STYLE

It's the magical season when, for some lucky urbanites, extra hours appear in the weekend. Ninety minutes could get you straight to proper fun on an experience-packed island paradise...or merely from cubicle to car. Where will your Summer Fridays lead? The do's and don'ts of maximizing Summer Friday afternoons, presented by Bermuda.





PLAN YOUR [SCAPE:
GOTOBERMUDA.COM/
SUMMERFRIDAYS
#SUMMERFRIDAYS

BEACH CHAIR OR DESK?

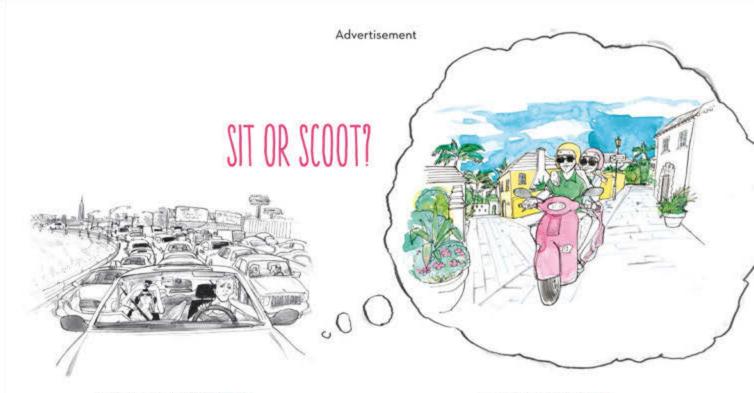
SUMMER FRIDAY DO

HOP ON A 90-MINUTE FLIGHT FROM THE EAST COAST AND HAVE YOUR TOES IN PINK-SAND BEACHES—WITH A DARK 'N' STORMY IN YOUR HAND—BEFORE SUNSET.



SUMMER FRIDAY DON'T

STAY AT YOUR DESK OVER AFTERNOON COFFEE TO LET THE TRAFFIC THIN OUT.



SUMMER FRIDAY DON'T

WITH SUMMER FRIDAY CAR TRAFFIC VOLUMES, SOME FUN-SEEKERS SIT 90 MINUTES BEFORE LEAVING THE CITY.

SUMMER FRIDAY DO

ISLAND HOP TO BERMUDA VIA A QUICK NON-STOP FLIGHT, THEN YOU ARE FREE TO SCOOT, SAIL, OR KAYAK AROUND THIS PROPER PLAYGROUND.



SUMMER FRIDAY DON'T

STAYCATIONS MAY STIFLE INSTEAD OF INSPIRE: THEY MIGHT SOUND GOOD ON PAPER BUT THEY ARE HARDLY REFRESHING.

SUMMER FRIDAY DO

TO REALLY TAKE FLIGHT, SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO SUBMERGE—LIKE IN WORLD-CLASS SNORKELING AND WRECK-DIVING IN BERMUDA'S TURQUOISE WATERS.

90 MINUTES TO...
PROPER FRIDAYS PROPER FUN



THE PERFECT FATHER'S DAY GIFT

"NONFICTION LIKE HIGH DRAMA."

-PEOPLE

"THRILLING,
DRAMATIC
AND
POWERFUL."

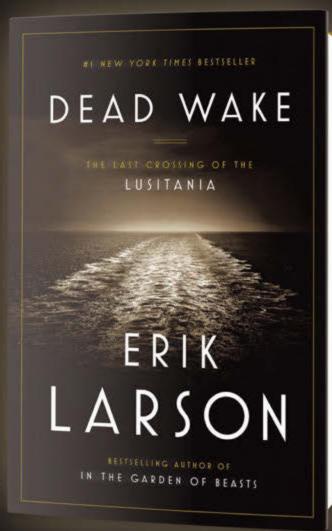
-NPR

"ENTHRALLLING."

-THE WASHINGTON POST

"UTTERLY ENGROSSING."

-THE SEATTLE TIMES



#I NEW YORK
TIMES
BESTSELLER

"FIRST-RATE SUSPENSE."

-THE BOSTON GLOBE

"TERRIFYING."

-ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

"ALTOGETHER RIVETING."

-DALLAS MORNING NEWS

SHE WAS THE WORLD'S FASTEST PASSENGER SHIP.

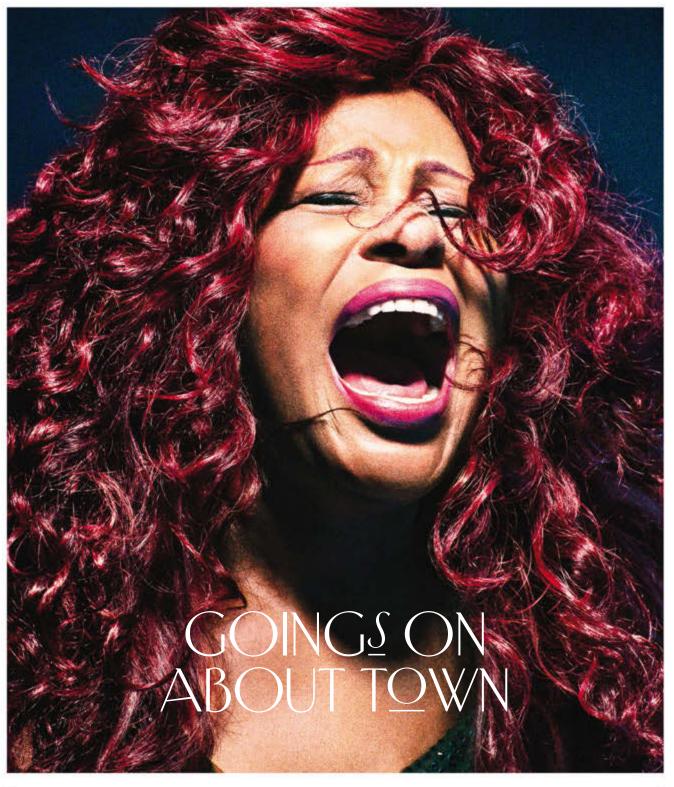
HE WAS ONE OF GERMANY'S DEADLIEST HUNTERS.

THE FATEFUL UNTOLD STORY OF THE

LUSITANIA.







JUNE FRIDAY ATURDAY SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY 2015 3 R D 4 T H 5 T H 6 T H 7 T H 8 T H 9 T H 10 T H 11 T H 12 T H 13 T H 14 T H 15 T H 16 T H

CHAKA KHAN'S 1984 INTERPRETATION of Prince's "I Feel for You" begins with Grandmaster Melle Mel rapping her name, followed by drums and Stevie Wonder's harmonica; it's not until the forty-five-second mark that Khan's vocals arrive, a fittingly late entrance for a diva. That song remains her biggest hit, but there are many others: the slinky "Tell Me Something Good" and the insistent "Ain't Nobody," both recorded with the group Rufus; the triumphant "I'm Every Woman"; and "Through the Fire," sampled by Kanye West on his first single, "Through the Wire." Khan brings these and many more songs from her funky back catalogue to Prospect Park on June 3, for the opening of the free-concert series Celebrate Brooklyn!

MOVIES | THE THEATRE ART | CLASSICAL MUSIC DANCE | NIGHT LIFE ABOVE & BEYOND FOOD & DRINK





Iris Hall and Walker Thompson star in the silent film "The Symbol of the Unconquered," screening at MOMA.

ON THE ROAD

Pioneering black filmmakers in a Great Migration series.

IN CONJUNCTION WITH ITS EXHIBIT of Jacob Lawrence's "Migration" paintings, MOMA is offering a noteworthy film program, "A Road Three Hundred Years Long: Cinema and the Great Migration" (through June 12). It features the work of several black filmmakers who themselves moved North in the early twentieth century, and who made the transition their subject.

Oscar Micheaux, who directed his first feature in 1918, wasn't the first black American filmmaker—the great comedian Bert Williams directed his own comedies several years earlier—but he may well have been the first director of reflexive autofiction, as seen in "The Symbol of the Unconquered," from 1920 (screening June 3 and June 6). Born in southern Illinois, a virtual Southern territory at the time, he lived in Chicago as a young man before becoming a homesteader in rural South Dakota. In "The Symbol of the Unconquered," he dramatizes that experience, probing both its over-all contours and its most intimate details.

The story is centered on Eve Mason (Iris Hall), a light-skinned young black woman from Selma, Alabama, who inherits her late grandfather's property in the northwest. There, she meets a neighbor, Hugh Van Allen (Walker Thompson), a darker-skinned black man who falls in love with her but, taking her for white, doesn't dare to declare his affection. The story parallels Micheaux's own romantic misfortune—his undeclared love for a white woman—but the filmmaker builds the underlying theme of racial conflict into a political conflagration that reflects the monstrous violence of the day. As if in response both to D. W. Griffith's heroic

depiction of the Ku Klux Klan in "The Birth of a Nation," and to the race riots of 1919, Micheaux focusses on the story of Van Allen's persecution by a local version of the Klan, a cabal of pointy-hooded, torch-bearing men on horseback who plan to kill Van Allen and steal his land. Micheaux, an autobiographical novelist before turning to movies, packs "The Symbol of the Unconquered" with a wealth of side characters and subplots that feel like a journalistic deep dive into the economic, social, and criminal underpinnings of the startup town as well as a literary study of the complex psychology of race relations in the North.

The novelist Zora Neale Hurston's film work is one of the great revelations of MOMA's series. Born in Alabama, she moved to Baltimore in the nineteen-tens. and to New York in the nineteentwenties. Between 1927 and 1929, she returned to the South to study black residents' customs and culture. Equipped with a 16-mm. movie camera, she filmed "fieldwork footage" (June 9-10), depicting them at work, at school, and at leisure. Though her motives were anthropological, her results are poetic. Hurston's visions of a baptism in deep water foreshadow the ecstatic imagery of Julie Dash's 1991 feature, "Daughters of the Dust" (screening June 7-8), which dramatizes the 1902 departure of Gullah island residents for Northern cities.

-Richard Brody

NTHERACE

AGAINST TIME, IT'S BEST TO RACE IN ONE OF THESE.

Any airline can get you places. Getting you there exactly when they say they're going to is the tricky part. Doing it better than any U.S. global airline? That's something to crow about.



KEEP CLIMBING

DELTA

Based on DOT Air Travel Consumer Report arrivals statistics for 2014 for domestic flights flown and compared for U.S. global carriers: American Airlines, JetBlue Airways, United Airlines, and Virgin America.

ENTOURAGE

An adaptation of the inside-Hollywood television series, starring Jeremy Piven, as an agent; Adrian Grenier, as an actor; and Jessica Alba and Ronda Rousey, as themselves. Directed by Doug Ellin. Opening June 3. (In wide release.)

FREEDOM

A historical drama, connecting events aboard a mid-eighteenth-century slave ship with the Underground Railroad. Directed by Peter Cousens; starring Cuba Gooding, Jr. Opening June 5. (In limited

JURASSIC WORLD

A sequel to "Jurassic Park," about the catastrophic effects of a theme park featuring cloned dinosaurs. $\mathsf{Directed}\ \mathsf{by}\ \mathsf{Colin}$ Trevorrow; starring Chris Pratt and Judy Greer. Opening June 12. (In wide release.)

LOVE & MERCY

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening June 5. (In limited release.)

ME AND EARL AND THE DYING GIRL

A comic drama, about two high-school friends (Thomas Mann and Ronald Cyler II) who make a film for a classmate who has leukemia (Olivia Cooke). Directed by Alfonso Gomez-Rejon. Ópening June 12. (In limited release.)

A PIGEON SAT ON A BRANCH REFLECTING ON **EXISTENCE**

A comedy, directed by Roy Andersson, about the misadventures of two itinerant toy salesmen in Sweden. Opening June 3. (In limited release.)

Melissa McCarthy stars in this comedy, as a C.I.A. desk jockey who takes on a dangerous mission. Directed by Paul Feig. Opening June 5. (In wide release.)

THE WOLFPACK

Crystal Moselle directed this documentary, about seven children whose father kept them locked in a New York City apartment for many years. Opening June 12. (In limited release.)

NOW PLAYING

The Birth of a Nation

D. W. Griffith's grand-scale melodrama, from 1915, centered on the Civil War and set mainly in South Carolina, is justly reviled for its overt racism. The director puts a favorable light on antebellum slavery, shows the postwar South in the grip of ridiculous, rapacious, sexually predatory blacks, and depicts the founding and deployment of the Ku Klux Klan (by none other than his hero, a dashing young Confederate officer) as a deliverance. The movie would long have vanished into the rathole of time were it not for the scope and inventiveness with which Griffith realized it. He modulates spectacular battle scenes (including the phantasmagorical burning of Atlanta) with intimate dramas, and he films his stories from multiple perspectives that, taken together, open the movie up to far more—and more ambiguous-realities than Griffith had intended. A scene of a lynching appears as an absolute, unredeemable horror; the disenfranchisement of black voters as a cruel and criminal injustice. Though the bias of Griffith's story is blatantly false, his idea of film form is enduring and true. His conception of the cinema as the reflection and living repository of history offered later filmmakers powerful and protean tools with which to do the right thing. Silent.—Richard Brody (Film Forum; June 7.)

The Damned

The very first shots of Joseph Losey's 1961 drama set a tone of chilled alienation that's utterly of its time, as does the action with which the movie begins—the assault on a proper gentleman by a gang of leather-jacketed teddy boys. The violent youths who rampage through the rustic seaside town of Weymouth are led by a sarcastic, dapper psychopath (Oliver Reed), who is pathologically attached to his sister (Shirley Anne Field). She, in turn, falls in love with the middle-aged American executive (Macdonald Carey) who was their victim. Meanwhile, a sculptor (Viveca Lindfors) has a troubled relationship with a government scientist (Alexander Knox), who is raising, in a secret program, a group of children who are immune to radiation and destined to be the sole survivors of the impending nuclear war. Losey's strongest critique of the times emerges with a unique stylistic flourish in his wide-screen, black-and-white images, featuring slow glides, skewed angles, standoffish perspectives, and hectic striations. These images seem adorned with quotation marks, as if Losey placed his own movie in the mediatized madness that he was criticizing. His conflicted approach to modernity appears in the cutting-edge accessories-from chic attire and high-tech audiovisual equipment to sports cars and balletic

helicopters-that dazzle him even as he rues them. -R.B. (BAM Cinématek; June 12.)

Gemma Bovery

An Englishman and his wife move to a small town in Normandy, and cause a minor stir. Just to make things worse, their names are Charlie Bovery (Jason Flemyng) and Gemma (Gemma Arterton): a coincidence that Joubert (Fabrice Luchini), the local baker, finds overwhelming. As a devotee of "Madame Bovary," he is especially gratified when Gemma, true to her fictional counterpart, tires of her passionless husband and falls for a well-bred cad. Anne Fontaine's movie, based on a graphic novel by Posy Simmonds, is never sure of the angle at which it stands to Flaubert's book; are we meant to be watching an update, a parody, or an inoffensive riff? And does the camera have to brood quite so shamelessly over Arterton at every turn? Only in the eyes of Luchini, rapt with bafflement and provincial longing, does the film feel worthy of its model. In French and English. - Anthony Lane (Reviewed in our issue of 6/1/15.) (In limited release.)

Good Kill

Tommy Egan (Ethan Hawke) is a major in the U.S. Air Force, stationed outside Las Vegas. It's an unlikely perch for a combat pilot, especially one with thousands of flying hours to his credit, but then Tommy, these days, never leaves the ground. He sits in a metal box and directs unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones, toward targets on the far side of the world—in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, and other hot spots. He dislikes the job, despite his skill at it, and dislikes himself even more for doing it; he takes to drink, his wife (January Jones) finds him distant, and his senior officer (Bruce Greenwood) continues, against his better judgment, to argue the case for drone warfare. Andrew Niccol's movie is almost Tommy-tight-increasingly airless, boxed in by its own anxieties, and easier to admire, for its solid construction and its command of tone, than to warm to. But the scenes of destruction, calmly wrought by remote control, grow ever more unnerving to the eye and the conscience alike, and Hawke does a fine job of showing the progress of self-contempt as it eats into the hero's habits and into his stricken face. With Zoë Kravitz.—A.L. (5/18/15) (In limited release.)

Greenery Will Bloom Again

In this seventy-two-minute feature, the octogenarian Ermanno Olmi depicts the physical and emotional torment of Italian soldiers enduring combat in subterranean barracks beneath snow-packed fields during the First World War. His anecdotal narrative-based on tales he heard from his father, a veteran-sardonically reflects the randomness of death, as well as the unforeseeable displays of courage and outbursts of revolt at moments of crisis. Life hangs on the strength of a telephone wire, rampant disease ravages esprit de corps, and the enemy's espionage inspires paranoid anxiety. Over-all, the movie offers little of the visual poetry and analysis that made Olmi's name, but, in a remarkable scene near the end, a literary soldier composes a letter to his mother and recites it directly to the camera, followed by a montage of archival footage. The sequence delivers an aesthetic shock, and launches the film beyond the narrow confines of the action. With an intimate simplicity, Olmi evokes the decades of political and social upheavals throughout Europe that followed the fragile peace, suggesting the colossal toll of all wars. His story points past the Second World War and into modern times. In Italian.—R.B. (Film Society of Lincoln Center; June 6 and June 8.)

Heaven Knows What

The destructive power of heroin—the effects of the drug itself and the desperate efforts to get it—is in evidence throughout this furious drama of destitute young addicts surviving on the streets of today's luxurious Upper West Side. The directors Josh and Benny Safdie add an element that renders it all the more toxic: love. Harley (Arielle Holmes) is devoted to Ilya (Caleb Landry Jones) with a nearly religious fanaticism, despite his brutal indifference to her suicidal threats. She makes an attempt and recovers in a psychiatric hospital; upon her release, she takes up with Mike (Buddy Duress), a motormouthed low-level drug dealer who provokes Ilya's violent jealousy. The script, written by Josh Safdie and Ronald Bronstein, is based on Holmes's memoir; it's filled with astonishing, geographically specific details of addicts' daily practical agonies-the struggle for shelter and a place to shoot up, the habits of theft and begging, their unwelcome patronage of fast-food restaurants and public libraries, the emotional deprivation of near-feral subsistence. The Safdies-aided by the raw intimacy of Sean Price Williams's camera work-capture Harley's panic-stricken rage and futile tenderness, as in a harrowing macrophotographic shot of her inability to thread a needle due to tremors.—R.B. (In limited release.)

In the Name of My Daughter

The true story of a late-seventies murder case, which is well-known in France, is a ready-made classic melodrama. Catherine Deneuve is calmly ferocious as Renée Le Roux, the elegant widow of a casino owner in Nice who is struggling to keep the business afloat in the face of predatory competition from a mobster (Jean Corso). Her lonely



More than **180,000** audio titles—from best sellers to literary classics. Download your first audiobook for free at audible.com/ny



REVIVALS AND FESTIVALS

Titles in bold are reviewed.

ANTHOLOGY FILM

ARCHIVES
"This Is Celluloid: 35mm." June 3 at 7 and June 6 at 5: "Moonfleet" (1955, Fritz Lang). • June 7 at 9: "M."

BAM CINÉMATEK

"Black and White Scope." June 6 at 4 and 8: "Lola." • June 12 at 9:30: "The Damned." • June 14 at 5: "Red Beard."

FILM FORUM

In revival. June 3-4 (call for showtimes): "Pickup on South Street." • June 7 at 3:20: "The Birth of a Nation." • "Gabriel Figueroa." June 12 at 2:15 and 5:45 and June 13 at 2:15, 8:15, and 10: "Los Olvidados." • June 16 at 6:45: "Nazarín" (1958, Luis

FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN

"Open Roads." June 6 at 6:30 and June 8 at 4: "Greenery Will Bloom Again."

IEC CENTER

The films of Catherine Deneuve. June 5-7 at 11 A.M.: "Mississippi Mermaid."

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

"Cinema and the Great Migration." June 3 at 4:30 and June 6 at 7:45: "The Symbol of the Unconquered" (1920, Oscar Micheaux). • June 3 at 6:45 and June 6 at 2:30: "The Blood of Jesus" (1941, Spencer Williams). • June 7 at 2 and June 8 at 4: "Daughters of the Dust" (1992, Julie Dash). • June 8 at 6:45 and June 11 at 4: "Swing!" (1938, Micheaux). • June 9 at 4 and June 10 at 6:30: Short-film program, including fieldwork footage by Zora Neale Hurston (1927-29). • "Glorious Technicolor." June 10 at 4:30: "Captain Lightfoot" (1955, Douglas Sirk). • June 10 at 6:45: "Magnificent Obsession.'



MOVIE OF THE WEEK

A video discussion of Charlie Chaplin's "Limelight," from 1952, in our digital edition and online.

and socially awkward daughter, Agnès (Adèle Haenel), returns home to ask for her inheritance, which is tied up in the casino. There, Agnès gets involved with Maurice Agnelet (Guillaume Canet), an ambitious but unappreciated-and married-local attorney who is her mother's righthand man. When Maurice's drive for power puts him at odds with Renée, he influences Agnès to help him work some behind-the-scenes mischief-and to get hold of her money. When Agnès disappears, Maurice is accused of murder. The director, André Téchiné, has a keen eve for the Balzacian furies behind the cold formalities of business and the stifling mores of the provincial bourgeoisie. The movie's French title, "The Man They Loved Too Much," suggests its true focus: Maurice, the Machiavellian outcast who pulls the strings. The story's tension slackens when the action extends to later years, but by that time a dramatic feast has already been served. In French.—R.B. (In limited release.)

This first film by Jacques Demy is like an adolescent's dream of romance, formed from old movies. Lola (Anouk Aimée) is simple and open, an untalented and not too bright cabaret dancer, a vulnerable, sentimental girl. The film gives us life rosetinted—a lovely, quirky mixture of Frenchmovie worldliness circa 1939 and the innocent cheerfulness of M-G-M musicals of the forties. Demy gently mocks romantic movie effects, which he employs more romantically than ever. Characters suddenly get rich or are stranded on an island, and Lola's dreams come true-and not just her dreams but her illusions. This is a poetic world in which illusions are vindicated. Lola, abandoned by her sailor lover, brings up their son in the best sentimental, goodhearted-bad-girl movie tradition, believing all the time that her man will return, and, because she sustains her faith in this illusion. he does return, fabulously rich and still in love with her, and they drive off into a bright future as the other cabaret girls weep in unison at the soul-satisfying beauty of it all. Lola, in top hat and boa for her nightclub act, is herself a quotation—an homage to Dietrich's "Lola Lola" of "The Blue Angel," but only to the effervescent and harmless half. Released in 1961. In French.-Pauline Kael (BAM Cinématek; June 6.)

Love at First Fight

This drama, directed by Thomas Cailley, is centered on the rough physicality of two young adults in a cozy lakeside town in western France. Arnaud (Kévin Azaïs) is a carpenter who, with his brother (Antoine Laurent), is struggling to maintain the small construction firm that they inherited from their father. Madeleine (Adèle Haenel), a disaffected college

student from a bourgeois family, is possessed of apocalyptic visions and paranoid plans for survival. Meeting cute in a wrestling match at an Army-recruitment fair, Arnaud and Madeleine begin a brusque flirtation that intensifies when they take a twoweek Army commando-training course. For a movie about bodily endurance and rugged adventure, Cailley's direction is oddly detached-he lets the script (which he co-wrote with Claude Le Pape) suggest the tough work and hardly bothers to film it. But near the end the long, schematic setup delivers a remarkable twist: the near-couple's theoretical training for survival gets put to a severe practical test. Here, too, Cailley leaves much of the most interesting action to the imagination, but the power of his idea overrides, albeit briefly, the thinness of its realization. In French.—R.B. (In limited release.)

The police investigation at the heart of Joseph Losey's 1951 remake of Fritz Lang's 1931 German classic, about the hunt for a serial child-killer, reflects the McCarthyite inquisitions that Losey was enduring at the time (and which led to his blacklisting and exile). Sticking closely to the plot of the original, Losey turns the story into pungent Americana through his attention to alluringly grubby Los Angeles locations. Ernest Laszlo's cinematography renders the mottled sidewalks and grim façades eloquent; urgent tracking and crane shots convey the paranoid pairing of menace and surveillance. David Wayne brings a hectic pathos to the role of the psychopath at war with his urges, and such character actors as Howard Da Silva and Raymond Burr lend streetwise flair to the officers of the law and the underworld posse competing to catch the killer. The Brechtian irony of criminals delivering punishment is a Berlin import, the Freudian psychology is an American touch, and the corrosive view of the government is the kind that could—and did—get a filmmaker in trouble.-R.B. (Anthology Film Archives; May 29 and June 1.)

Mad Max: Fury Road

The fourth chapter in the saga of Max and the best, even if you emerge with dented eyeballs. The loner's role that belonged to Mel Gibson now passes to Tom Hardy, who, as is only proper, gets little to say but plenty to do, most of it involving fire, dust, velocity, and blood. The time is the looming future, the landscape is dry and stripped of greenery, and, to cap it all, Max is a prisoner. Once escaped, he teams up with Furiosa (Charlize Theron), a one-armed and single-minded truck driver, who is carrying a cargo of young women-stealing them, in fact, from a masked tyrannical brute named Immortan Joe (Hugh Keays-Byrne), who uses them as breeders. The feminist

slant of the movie comes as a welcome surprise, while the rampant verve of the action sequences is pretty much what admirers of George Miller, the director, have been praying for. Rarely has a filmmaker seemed less in need of a brake pedal. Luckily, his sense of humor remains undamaged, and his eye for extravagant design is as keen as ever; some of the makeup is so drastic that you can barely distinguish between human flesh and the bodywork of cars. The director of photography, keeping his composure in the melee, is John Seale.—A.L. (5/25/15) (In wide release.)

Magnificent Obsession

This implausible, extravagant, coincidence-riddled romantic drama, from 1954, made Rock Hudson a star and Douglas Sirk a specialist in "women's pictures," a genre that he infused with a philosophical import all his own. The astonishing plot is centered on Bob Merrick (Hudson), an arrogant playboy in a small town in upstate New York, whose mischief contributes to the death of a beloved doctor, Wayne Phillips. Merrick meets and falls for Phillips's widow (Jane Wyman), gets her into an accident that blinds her, and-after many years of devoted exertions—becomes a brain surgeon, in the hope of operating on her and restoring her sight. The late Dr. Phillips turns out to have been something of a religious philosopher, whose metaphysics of charity unlocked the talent of his best friend (Otto Kruger), an artist, who, in turn, imparts the wisdom to Merrick-and Sirk, a German émigré, locates the source of this New World gospel in the lovingly depicted American landscape. Besides treating the ridiculous story with the utmost dramatic precision and visual coherence, the director lends it surprising thematic depth. Every step depends on stifled emotions and closely guarded secrets, resulting in a buildup of operatic passion that endows everyday gestures and inflections with grandeur and nobility.—R.B. (MOMA; June 10.)

Mississippi Mermaid

François Truffaut's doom-laden romantic thriller, from 1969, stars Catherine Deneuve as Julie Roussel, a mail-order bride who travels from her home in Paris to the island of Réunion to wed Louis Mahé (Jean-Paul Belmondo), a wealthy businessman on whom she has predatory designs. Louis is inhibited and Julie is cagy; she ensnares him in a net of sexual obsession that pulls him, open-eyed and willing, down into the dregs of life. The film's methodical pacing bears the anguish of a slow-motion catastrophe; long silences are built into the story of the tentative couple. Under starchy bourgeois formalities, Truffaut finds a rampant daily eroticism of leers and glimpses, probings and pawings that are all the more enticing for their air of dirtiness. His tautly controlled

WHITNEY

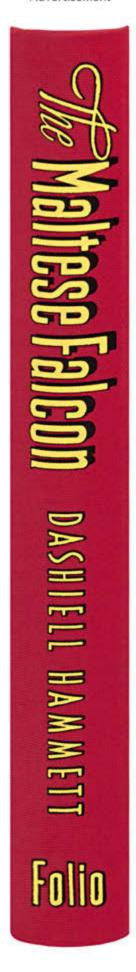


AMERICAN ART IS NOW AT HOME IN THE MEATPACKING

The inaugural exhibition, America is Hard to See is sponsored by

Bank of America

Robert Honri, Gertrude Vanderbill Whitney, 1916, Oil on cannas, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York: gift of Flora Whitney Miller 86,70.3 Whitney Museum of American Art 99 Gansevoort Street whitney.org #NewWhitney



widescreen images lend an unnatural chill to the garish tropical light of Réunion; their complex and delicate pirouettes throb with the thrill of sex and violence. Under her cold manners and glossy looks, Julie is another of Truffaut's feral survivors of a wild childhood, a vengeful outcast from a society that tormented her from the start. The redemptive power of love is joined with a stifled guffaw of irony.—R.B. (IFC Center; June 5-7.)

Los Olvidados

Set in Mexico, Luis Buñuel's ruthless-almost surgical-examination of how the poor prey on one another is the most horrifying of all films about juvenile crime. The one masterwork on this subject, it stands apart from the genre by its pitilessness, its controlled passion. Buñuel doesn't treat his characters as ideas but as morally responsible human beings; there is little of the familiar American-movie cant that makes everyone responsible for juvenile crimes except the juveniles. There's no pathos in this film; it's a squalid tragedy that causes the viewer to feel a moral terror. Buñuel, whose early work fascinated Freud, creates scenes that shock one psychologically. Among them here is the mother-meat dream-perhaps the greatest of all movie dream sequences; it is disturbing long after the lacerations of the more realistic material have healed. Buñuel had intended much more in this surreal vein but he did not have a completely free hand. For example, in the scene in which one of the boys goes to beat up and kill another boy, the camera reveals in the distance a huge eleven-story building under construction; Buñuel had wanted to put an orchestra of a hundred musicians in the building. The cast includes Estela Inda and Roberto Cobo; the cinematography is by Gabriel Figueroa. Released in 1950. In Spanish.—*P.K.* (Film Forum; June 12-13 and June 16.)

Pickup on South Street

Samuel Fuller's bilious, streetwise drama, from 1953, begins with what looks like a molestation on a crowded New York subway train, of a glossy young woman, Candy (Jean Peters), by a leering young wolf (Richard Widmark). But something else occurs: he slips into her handbag and gets away with her wallet-which happens to contain microfilm of a military formula that she's delivering to Communist agents. The man, Skip McCoy, is a well-known pickpocket (or, in the trade, a "cannon"), who is named to the police by Mo Williams (Thelma Ritter), an aging stool pigeon who lives above a tattoo parlor on the Bowery. Candy, who has a criminal past herself, also consults Mo and traces Skip to his waterfront bait shack beneath the Brooklyn Bridge, where both of them use sex as a weapon along with fists and beer bottles. The police are following them, and Candy's ex (Richard Kiley), himself a Communist agent, is being threatened by Party higher-ups. Fuller's pugnacious direction and his gutter-up view of city life romanticize both the criminal code of honor and the jangling paranoia of global plots; his hard-edged long takes depict underworld cruelty with reportorial wonder as well as moralistic dread.—R.B. (Film Forum; June 3-4.)

Pitch Perfect 2

Despite the ribald joke that sets the plot in motion, this musical sequel is even more sanitized and frictionless than the original. Because of a wardrobe malfunction at a high-profile performance (with the Obamas in attendance), the Barden Bellas, America's collegiate-champion a-cappella group, are banned from domestic competition—and must, instead, win a world title in order to be spared dissolution. Meanwhile, with graduation looming, the members

of the group have life choices to make: Beca (Anna Kendrick), the most musically talented, secretly takes an internship at a recording studio; Chloe (Brittany Snow), the leader of the pack, delays facing life after college; Fat Amy (Rebel Wilson) can't admit that she's in love. The group's chemistry is altered by the arrival of an over-eager freshman (Hailee Steinfeld) just as they're preparing to face the existential threat of a swaggering German troupe. Meanwhile, the bickering commentators, John (John Michael Higgins) and Gail (Elizabeth Banks, who also directed), offer wan comic diversion. In her feature directorial début, Banks doesn't reveal much personality, though her affection for the performers is evident; they're a joy to watch, but they have little to do. Ethnic clichés abound, college comes off as a free sleepaway camp, and the simple wonders of unaccompanied singing are inflated to Las Vegas-style bombast.—R.B. (In wide release.)

Red Beard

This 1965 film, the last of Akira Kurosawa's collaborations with Toshiro Mifune, is often derided as a soap opera. But the story-of a grizzled nineteenth-century doctor nicknamed Red Beard (Mifune) and the green physician (Yuzo Kayama) who learns humane medical values from him-is actually a masterpiece. Kurosawa somehow manages to imbue every moment of this three-hour-plus movie with the transcendent vitality and intelligence of a great Victorian novel. Mifune wisely plays a selfless hero with fierce brusqueness. He leads Kayama's headstrong, sensitive neophyte toward an understanding of healing as a social process, not merely as a doling-out of diagnoses and prescriptions. In Kurosawa's dynamic yet intimate wide-screen filmmaking, practicality and empathy merge with psychoanalysis and even bits of magic; the young doctor's near-fatal close encounter with a female serial killer, and a virtuous man's deathbed confession of a horrifying marital tragedy, are among the sequences building to a genuinely inspirational conclusion. In Japanese.-Michael Sragow (BAM Cinématek; June 14.)

Results

One of the strangest and strongest of recent romantic triangles forms in the course of this lyrical, fanatically realistic comedy, written and directed by Andrew Bujalski. His subject is the overlap of business and pleasure. Kat (Cobie Smulders) is a trainer at a gym in Austin, Texas, which is run by Trevor (Guy Pearce), a small businessman with a big philosophy, who is also her occasional lover. Trevor sees fitness in terms of "physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual" values, which appeal to a new client, Danny (Kevin Corrigan), who's out of shape, well-to-do, and socially awkward. Kat begins to train Danny in his palatial but unfurnished home; Danny's big check for advance payments will help Trevor expand the gym. But Kat begins an affair with Danny as well, and their relationship gets in the way of business. Bujalski pays close attention to money and its power, seeing a small business like a film production—a matter of comic drama that runs on personalities. He stages the clashes of idiosyncratic characters that give the enterprise its life while observing the infinitesimal details of which that life is made-how to make new friends, how to hook up cable TV-as well as the ethereally intimate connections that result.—*R.B.* (In limited release.)

Slow West

Whether the début feature from John Maclean was wisely titled is open to debate. The story

certainly ambles along, yet it lasts less than ninety minutes, and there are times when it quickens into bursts of compelling activity. Kodi Smit-McPhee plays the youthful Jay, who travels from Scotland (not that you would guess it from his accent) to America-aiming for Colorado, where his beloved, Rose (Caren Pistorius), is said to be. Enter Silas (Michael Fassbender), who knows the country and offers to guide the hapless Jay to his destination, for cash. Along the way, they are tested by various incidents, some of which are no more than narrative doodling, bereft of purpose; others, however, like a gunfight in a secluded store, make more of an impact, as does the climax, set amid fields of ripe corn. Maclean reserves the best for last, in a quiet reckoning of all the human damage that has been left behind. In an uneven cast, it is Fassbender and Pistorius who stand out—the first, as sombre as usual; the second, steady and lethal beyond her years.—A.L. (5/18/15) (In limited release.)

Tomorrowland

The new Brad Bird film begins in 1964, with a kid called Frank Walker (Thomas Robinson) attending the New York World's Fair—as bright on the eye as the fair at the end of "Meet Me in St Louis." Wowed by what he sees, he is led by a serene young girl (Raffey Cassidy) to a theme ride, which plunges him into an ideal future, frictionless and fun. Cut to the present, as the grownup Frank (George Clooney) hides away in a farmhouse, grumpy as hell, wondering what happened to all that promise. He is visited by Casey (Britt Robertson), an inquisitive student, whose hopes are as high as Frank's used to be; together, they set off to find Tomorrowland once more, to recharge the shape of things to come. As you would expect from the director of "The Incredibles," the film has plenty of zip when it's on the run, and you can hardly move for gizmos; if anyone was going to strike back against the rage for dystopian sci-fi, it was bound to be Bird. But there's a blur of both motive and plot at the core of the movie, and a passage of pure blah at the end-no surprise, perhaps, given that the title refers to a zone at Disneyland. Hugh Laurie has a thankless role as a villain; the acting honors go to Cassidy.—A.L. (6/1/15) (In limited release.)

Uncertain Terms

A rural group home for pregnant teen-agers is the setting for this intimately detailed, sharply observed modernist melodrama, directed by Nathan Silver. The director's mother, Cindy Silver, plays Carla Gottlieb, the residence's founder and leader. Carla—herself a onetime unwed mother—hosts five girls at a time; in quiet but intense confessional scenes of formal sharing or offhand chat, they discuss their difficult situations. The troubles ramp up with the arrival of Carla's grown nephew, Robbie (David Dahlbom), newly separated from his wife, who volunteers for a two-week stint as a handyman. While there, Robbie becomes a part of the household and falls in love with Nina (India Menuez), one of the pregnant women, sparking conflict with her boyfriend, Chase (Casey Drogin). Silver's incisive direction blends patient discernment and expressive angularity; he develops his characters in deft and rapid strokes and builds tension with an almost imperceptible heightening of tone and darkening of mood. The involuted acting and the freestyle cinematography, intensely sensitive to the flickers of the moment, yield sensual and emotional wonders. With a superbly poised, experienced independent-film cast that includes Gina Piersanti ("It Felt Like Love"), Hannah Gross ("I Used to Be Darker"), and Tallie Medel ("The Unspeakable Act").—R.B. (In limited release.)

An **exclusive offer** for New Yorker readers

Back to the original

with beautiful editions from The Folio Society

Great films have great source material. In this cinematic season, own your favourite narratives in stunning visual formats to rival anything on the silver screen.



THE GIFT OF GREAT BOOKS

Stunning editions of classic and contemporary works, ideal for Father's Day, graduations, birthdays and more.











Save 20% on Folio Society editions of great film titles

Go to foliosociety.com/tnyreader and quote code F20PNY at checkout

Offer closes on June 19, 2015



THE THEATRE =



SAINT JOAN

Marion Cotillard plays Joan of Arc, at Avery Fisher Hall.

A FRIEND OF MINE who's a very intelligent moviegoer said of the performer Marion Cotillard that her acting seems so personal and delicate—like something between her and the character—that you just want to leave her alone with it and not analyze what's going on. I think I agree. With some performers, talking about what they do feels intrusive, and not in the standard paparazzi kind of way. Like many other people, I became aware of Cotillard when she burned through the screen as Edith Piaf in Olivier Dahan's 2007 film, "La Vie en Rose." After that, I started to play catch-up.

Born in Paris in 1975, Cotillard is the daughter of two performers. Her father worked as a mime for a time, and her mother is an actress and a drama teacher. Cotillard began acting at an early age, most notably with Jean-Luc Godard's muse Anna Karina in the French television series "Chloé." Like the older star, Cotillard seems to fully inhabit her best roles, which often center on struggle and doubt conveyed through not too much dialogue. That's part of Cotillard's genius—letting silence be and not dressing it up with any "notice me" tricks. She knows what the camera can and cannot do to magnify or reduce what burns through the soul and becomes character.

Cotillard is a character actress who's also a star. This summer, she makes her New York theatrical début in a fully staged reading of "Joan of Arc at the Stake," directed by Côme de Bellescize. (Originally produced in Japan, for Seiji Ozawa's Saito Kinen festival, it's the final production of the New York Philharmonic season, June 10-13, at Avery Fisher Hall, in French, with English supertitles.) Alongside the Philharmonic orchestra, Cotillard plays the martyred leader with an elegance that may bring to mind a scene in the 1962 Godard drama, "Vivre Sa Vie,"in which Karina sheds tears as she watches Falconetti weep in Dreyer's 1928 film, "The Passion of Joan of Arc."

Cotillard is, she says, living her own life. In an interview she gave after the birth of her son, now four, she said, "Having a child has not changed the way I act, but it does stop me from bringing drama home in the evening. Most of the time, my characters are not super happy, full of joy, singing and dancing. You have to protect a kid from a dark mood, and yet I don't want to protect myself from my characters. It's a struggle."This is precisely what makes Cotillard one of the best actresses we have: her unqualified need for selfexpression in any number of roles, and her willingness to go for it.

-Hilton Als

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Doctor Faustus

Chris Noth stars in Christopher Marlowe's tale of a man who sells his soul to the Devil, directed by Andrei Belgrader. In previews. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 866-811-4111.)

Ghost Stories

Two short plays by David Mamet, directed by Scott Zigler. In "The Shawl," a grieving woman visits a mystic for help. In "Prairie du Chien," a card game on a train through Wisconsin turns menacing. In previews. Opens June 16. (Atlantic Stage 2, at 330 W. 16th St. 866-811-4111.)

Gloria

A new play by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins ("An Octoroon"), directed by Evan Cabnet, follows a group of ambitious editorial assistants who dream of getting published by the time they're thirty. In previews. Opens June 15. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303.)

Guards at the Taj

Amy Morton directs a new play by Rajiv Joseph ("Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo"), in which two imperial guards in seventeenth-century India watch the sun rise on the newly built Taj Mahal. In previews. Opens June 11. (Atlantic Theatre Company, 336 W. 20th St. 866-811-4111.)

Heisenberg

Denis Arndt and Mary-Louise Parker star in a play by Simon Stephens, directed by Mark Brokaw for Manhattan Theatre Club, about a random encounter between a man and a woman in a London train station. Opens June 3. (City Center Stage II, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

My Perfect Mind

In 2007, the classical actor Edward Petherbridge suffered a stroke while rehearsing for the part of King Lear. He dramatizes the experience at the "Brits Off Broadway" festival, in this collaboration with Kathryn Hunter and Paul Hunter. Previews begin June 10. Opens June 16. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

Notes of a Native Song

Stew and Heidi Rodewald, the musical duo behind "Passing Strange," present an evening of songs, video, and ruminations on the work of James Baldwin. June 3-7. (Harlem Stage at the Gatehouse, 150 Convent Ave., at 135th St. 212-281-9240.)

Of Good Stock

Manhattan Theatre Club's Lynne Meadow directs a play by Melissa Ross, in which a novelist's three grown daughters (Heather Lind, Jennifer Mudge, and Alicia Silverstone) reunite at their family home in Cape Cod. Previews begin June 4. (City Center Stage I, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

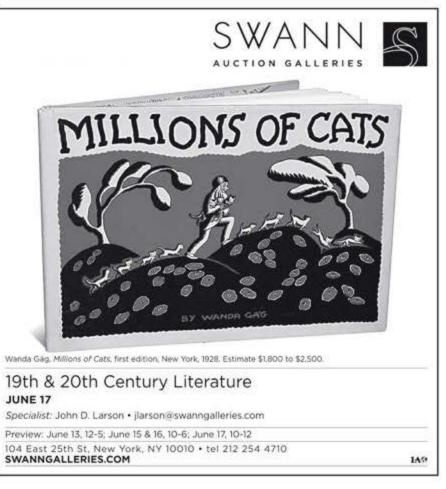
The Old Masters

In Sam Marks's play, directed by Brandon Stock, a little-known painter who has mysteriously disappeared becomes the toast of the art world, leaving the artist friend who discovered his work hungry for recognition. In previews. Opens June 7. (Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

Preludes

A new musical from Dave Malloy and Rachel Chavkin, the writer-director team behind "Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812," in which the composer Sergei Rachmaninoff sees a hypnotist after the ill-fated première of his first symphony. The cast includes Gabriel Ebert, Eisa Davis, and





ALSO NOTABLE AIRLINE HIGHWAY

Samuel J. Friedman. Through June 7.

AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

THE AUDIENCE Schoenfeld

THE BELLE OF BELFAST DR2. Through June 14.

CLINTON THE MUSICAL New World Stages

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT
OF THE DOG IN THE
NIGHT-TIME
Ethel Barrymore

FINDING NEVERLAND Lunt-Fontanne

FISH IN THE DARK

Cort

FUN HOMECircle in the Square

GIGI Neil Simon

HAND TO GOD Booth

HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH Belasco

IT SHOULDA BEEN YOU Brooks Atkinson

IT'S ONLY A PLAY Jacobs. Through June 7.

THE KING AND I

Vivian Beaumont

ON THE TOWN

Lvric

ON THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

American Airlines Theatre

THE PAINTED ROCKS AT REVOLVER CREEK

Pershing Square Signature Center. Through June 14.

PERMISSIONLucille Lortel. Through

June 14.

SKYLIGHT

Golden

SOMETHING ROTTEN! St. James

Pershing Square Signature
Center

THE 39 STEPSUnion Square Theatre

TUESDAYS AT TESCO'S

59E59. Through June 7.

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF

VERONA Polonsky Shakespeare

Center THE VISIT

Lyceum

WHAT I DID LAST SUMMER Pershing Square Signature Center. Through June 7.

WOLF HALL: PARTS ONE & TWOWinter Garden

Nikki M. James. In previews. Opens June 15. (Claire Tow, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200.)

The Qualms

Pam MacKinnon directs a new play by Bruce Norris ("Clybourne Park"), about a suburban couple who attend a spouse-swapping party that challenges their notions of free love. In previews. Opens June 14. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

Shows for Days

A new play by Douglas Carter Beane ("The Little Dog Laughed") traces the playwright's early experiences in community theatre, at a small Pennsylvania playhouse filled with big personalities. Patti LuPone and Michael Urie star in Jerry Zaks's production. Previews begin June 6. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200.)

Significant Other

The Roundabout stages a new play by Joshua Harmon ("Bad Jews"), directed by Trip Cullman, about a young gay urbanite searching for love as his female friends begin to settle down. In previews. (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

Smile at Us, Oh Lord

Vakhtangov State Academic Theatre of Russia performs a play about Jewish resilience in the early twentieth century, based on the novels of the Lithuanian-Israeli writer Grigory Kanovich. In Russian, with English supertitles. June 5-7. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

The Tempest

Sam Waterston stars as the sorcerer Prospero, in the first free Shakespeare in the Park production of the season, directed by Michael Greif. The cast also includes Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Louis Cancelmi, and Francesca Carpanini. In previews. Opens June 16. (Delacorte, Central Park. Enter at 81st St. at Central Park W. 212-967-7555.)

10 out of 12

Anne Washburn's newwork, directed by Les Waters, is set amid the drudgery and high tension of a technical rehearsal for a play. The fourteen-person cast includes Bruce McKenzie, Thomas Jay Ryan, Nina Hellman, and Sue Jean Kim. In previews. Opens June 10. (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St. 212-352-3101.)

The Twentieth-Century Way

Michael Michetti directs Tom Jacobson's two-person play, about homosexual entrapment at a public restroom in 1914 Los Angeles. Opens June 3. (Rattlestick, 224 Waverly Pl. 866-811-4111.)

NOW PLAYING

An Act of God

Is God dead? Lo, He is playing eight shows a week at Studio 54, in the form of Jim Parsons, the spritely star of

"The Big Bang Theory." Swathed in a white robe and flanked by two cranky angels (Christopher Fitzgerald and Tim Kazurinsky), the Almighty has come back to clear up a few misconceptions (He is pro-gay), unveil late-breaking Commandments ("Thou shalt separate Me and state"), and answer some of life's eternal questions, such as "Why is there something rather than nothing?" (Answer: "I was bored.") The former "Daily Show" writer David Javerbaum spun this crowd-pleasing entertainment from his popular Twitter handle, @TheTweetOfGod, though mostly it's a chance for Parsons to coast on his cheeky sitcom persona. Joe Mantello's production delivers a few good laughs, plenty of groaners ("I have wrath-management issues"), and nothing approaching sacrilege. (254 W. 54th St. 212-239-6200.)

ANT Fest 2015

The annual showcase for rising talents continues, with highlights including Kim Katzberg's comedy "Terry: Recovering Pet Detective"; "What's This Called, This Spirit?" a concert-play from the art-rock band the Scouts; "Checkpoint Charlie's State of Affairs," Charlotte Thun-Hohenstein's burlesque variety show; and "Argument Sessions," an interactive piece derived from Supreme Court transcripts. (Ars Nova, 511 W. 54th St. 212-352-3101.)

The Flick

The thirty-four-year-old playwright Annie Baker has an uncanny ear for casual speech, with its microaggressions and muted yearnings. Her Pulitzer Prize-winning play, which has moved downtown after premièring at Playwrights Horizons, in 2013, probes the banal patter of three employees at a small-town Massachusetts movie theatre. Left to sweep up the discarded popcorn of departed customers, Sam (Matthew Maher) and Avery (Aaron Clifton Moten) pass the hours swapping movie trivia, reviewing protocol, and tiptoeing around their attraction to Rose (Louisa Krause), the punky projectionist. Sam Gold's production is decidedly, almost daringly, slow, running three hours. Like Avery, who praises the movie house's commitment to celluloid, Baker is interested in texture: of conversation, of silence. Toward the end, when she introduces issues of race and class, we realize just how handily she has recalibrated our senses to the infinitesimal. (Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-868-4444.)

A Human Being Died That Night

In Nicholas Wright's play, based on a book by Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, a South African psychologist interrogates the apartheid-era political assassin Eugene de Kock in his prison cell. (BAM Fishman Space, 321 Ashland Pl., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100.)

Macbeth

This compact, muscular production, by the Public's Mobile Shakespeare

Unit-a theatrical rapid-response team-returns to base after touring prisons, homeless shelters, and other Bard deserts across the five boroughs and beyond. The director, Edward Torres, shaves the gory fable of drama's most murderous overachiever down to a breathless hundred minutes, during which the limber eight-member ensemble plays some thirty characters. The aesthetic is Tudor revival with an urban twist: arena seating, direct address, grungy costumes. Some nuance is inevitably lost to pell-mell pacing, but the vibrant cast makes up for it with clarity, commitment, and the undaunted equanimity that comes from performing in a new room each night. During a recent show, Lady Macbeth (Jennifer Ikeda), accustomed to tough crowds, put the evil spirits on hold while a cell phone rang in the audience. She got back to them after the beep. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555. Through June 7.)

The Sound and the Fury

"I couldn't leave it alone," William Faulkner said of "The Sound and the Fury." "And I never could tell it right." But rightness has never particularly interested Elevator Repair Service ("Gatz"), a venturesome company attracted to gaffe, snags, and elisions. They've remounted their word-for-word staging of the first quarter of Faulkner's novel, an aggressively nonlinear section narrated by Benjamin Compson, the developmentally disabled scion of a faltering Southern family. Twelve actors wander and dash through David Zinn's oversized living-room set, crossing race and gender lines as they trade shirts and nightgowns and roles, while passing around a paperback copy of the novel. The action roves from 1898 to 1928; projections occasionally delineate character and setting. The result is antic, mournful, impressionistic, and mystifying, perhaps a greater testament to the group's loopy dynamism than to Faulkner's literary achievement. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555.)

The Way We Get By

In the predawn hours, Doug (Thomas Sadoski) wakes up in a New York apartment, hours after having "insane good" sex with Beth (Amanda Seyfried, uncharacteristically abrasive). He's awkward and puppyish and a bit of a man-child ("It's vintage," he says of his "Star Wars" T-shirt); she's sarcastic and romantically jaded. What seems like a one-night stand between strangers is revealed, during Neil LaBute's eightyfive-minute play, to be something thornier and stranger. One of LaBute's talents is knowing how to spoon out information at satisfying intervals. The dialogue can be artificially gabby—you wonder how these two ever made it to bed, with all their talk about whether it's Sunday or Monday—but the play, directed by Leigh Silverman, relaxes into a sweet, searching little love story. Has LaBute finally gone soft? (Second Stage, 305 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)





MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Museum of Modern Art

"From Bauhaus to Buenos Aires: Grete Stern and Horacio Coppola" This big, handsomely installed exhibition devoted to the photography, film, and graphic design of a pair of busy but little-known avant-gardists is as engaging as it is enlightening. Stern, a German artist whose early photographic work (included here) was made in collaboration with Ellen Auerbach under the name Ringl + Pit, met the Argentine Coppola in Berlin, in 1932, and together they fled Nazi Germany the following year. After a period in London, where Coppola made fine, atmospheric cityscapes, the couple resettled in Buenos Aires, where they married, in 1935. Coppola documented that city's streets and architecture with an eye toward the interaction between people and their cosmopolitan environment, while Stern made a series of Surrealist photomontage representations of dreams (nearly all of them with female protagonists), which appeared in the popular press. These vivid but overwrought images are overshadowed in the exhibition by Stern's portraits, which are direct and incisive in a style that recalls

Through Oct. 4. Neue Galerie

"Russian Modernism: Cross-Currents of German and Russian Art, 1907-1917"

both Man Ray and August Sander.

The museum takes a prudent step past its usual Mitteleuropa stomping ground with this exhibition of interrelated Russian and German avant-gardes. Russian painters in the years before the revolution embraced proto-Cubist forms (as in Natalia Goncharova's scene of fractured rooftops) or a boldly colored Expressionism that echoes that of Munich's Der Blaue Reiter group. (Alexei von Jawlensky, a Russian painter who was part of that movement, is represented here by a garish mountain scene.) The show brims with names little known in the United States: a self-portrait by Petr Konchalovsky recalls Cézanne, while a daringly flat painting by Boris Grigoriev portrays a woman in plunging décolletage. Russian art of the age could be too dependent on folk representations and neo-primitivism-and this show, drawn in significant part from a private Russian collection, includes a few subpar landscapes

and genre pictures. There is relief at hand, though: the clarifying blast of Kasimir Malevich, whose 1914 drawing of a black cross grew out of his compatriots' experiments but also blew them away. Through Aug. 31.

GALLERIES-UPTOWN

Georg Baselitz

The German artist, an unexpected inclusion in this year's divisive Venice Biennale, has been painting fraught, upside-down figures for nearly fifty years. (Baselitz inverts the image, not the canvas; he paints as the retina perceives, before the brain puts the world right side up.) The dozen works here, from the early eighties, portray men eating and drinking with the artist's signature gestural brushwork. Whether you appreciate these dated paintings today depends on your tolerance for bombast and showmanship-and, given the artist's on-the-record remarks that women can't paint, your tolerance for male chauvinism. Through June 27. (Skarstedt, 20 E. 79th St. 212-737-2060.)

GALLERIES-CHELSEA

Pablo Bartholomew

These grainy black-and-white pictures look like they were pulled from the Indian artist's private photo album from the seventies: pictures of girlfriends, acid trips, and the lively bohemian circles that Bartholomew travelled in during the era. There are some dark moments, chronicling his struggle with addiction, but they're balanced by more buoyant images of friends-many of them writers and actors from India's film world—dancing or sprawled together on a bed, always caught off guard in candid pictures that convey intimacy, intensity, and an offhand charm. Through June 20. (Erben, 526 W. 26th St. 212-645-8701.)

Ellsworth Kelly

"Have you noticed, in any museum that has a Kelly, how everything else there looks sort of tacky?" So said one smitten viewer at the opening of what may be the American artist's all-time most thrilling gallery show. Commanding four separate spaces, fourteen highly varied new paintings, reliefs, and wall-mounted sculptures make other art appear overdressed and ill groomed. Most of the works

revisit and revive past formats (vertical polyptychs or shaped, sometimes layered canvases). The jumps from style to style continually reset your attention; it's like speed-dating angels. The one recurrent form is a thick. backward-B shape in aluminum, painted black, blue, red, or yellow. (Depending on your approach, the shape seems to open or to close, like a mouth.) Everywhere dramatized are Kelly's masteries of color, contour, proportion, and scale. What other artist, except Matisse, makes effulgent hues seem at one with cool intelligence? And in the art of what other, except Mondrian, does reductive design feel as passionate? Kelly knows what we like in abstraction-which we would not know, so profoundly, if not for him. Through June 20. (Marks, 502, 522 and 526 W. 22nd St.; 523 W. 24th St. 212-243-0200.)

Jutta Koether

The brainy German-born New York-based painter shows six new works whose wispy red-and-pink figures are accentuated by translucent underpainting. The main room has its lights on a timer, which allows viewers to see the iridescent brushstrokes under three conditions: dim, bright, and brightest. Koether quotes as freely from modern life-in one work, Angelina Jolie bows to Queen Elizabeth-as she does from art history. It may be unusual to see a medieval statue of St. Firmin holding his head in the company of a Balthus nymphet, but no weirder, Koether seems to suggest, than a silver-screen tomb raider turned humanitarian. Through June 6. (Bortolami, 520 W. 20th St. 212-727-2050.)

Lee Lozano

Disgruntled artists-and even the occasional cranky art critic-love to threaten to drop out of the art world. But Lozano actually followed through. In 1972, she left New York, stopped making art, and allegedly stopped speaking to women, as well. (She died in 1999, in Dallas.) The five paintings here, from 1964-65, are some of her sparest: sharp diagonal fields of maroon, ochre, and dark gray, racing, at times, across multiple canvases. Titles in the imperative mood—"Cram," "Slide," "Pitch"—capture the carnal, even violent energy that courses through Lozano's work, but a suite of meticulous preparatory drawings proves that her vigorous art was far from improvisational. On one sketch she wrote three names in a margin: "Bot"[icelli], "Leon"[ardo], and "Piero," masters she was either emulating or plotting to destroy. Through July 31. (Hauser & Wirth, 511 W. 18th St. 212-790-3900.)

Lee Ufan

The Korean minimalist, whose career was surveyed by the Guggenheim in 2011, was the leading figure in Mono-ha, the Japanese corollary of Italy's Arte Povera, but with more phenomenological baggage. Lee's recent sculptures are as gnomic as ever: boulders placed near steel rods and steel plates represent nothing except for themselves. Also on view are single-stroke paintings, which recall medieval Japanese monochrome landscapes as much as they do Barnett Newman's zips-rectangles of pigment that are neither more nor less important than the empty canvas that surrounds them. Through June 27. (Pace, 534 W. 25th St. 212-929-7000.)

GALLERIES-DOWNTOWN

Shio Kusaka and Jonas Wood

In this appealing show by husbandand-wife artists based in Los Angeles-she's a potter; he's a painter and printmaker—Kusaka and Wood draw inspiration not only from art historical precedents but also from each other. Kusaka's Hellenistic stoneware vases, decorated with triceratopses and brontosauri and witches on broomsticks, are echoed in Wood's paintings and drawings, which include jauntily decorated vessels, as well as flowering plants. Two of Wood's gouaches depict short, wide pots whose surfaces redeploy Matisse's "Red Studio" and "Red Room": domestic visions of a painter who, like these talented figures, saw no point in distinguishing between the fine arts and the decorative. Through June 13. (Karma, 39 Great Jones St. 917-675-7508.)

Torbjørn Rødland

Like Roe Ethridge and Charlie White, this Norwegian photographer, based in L.A., is at his best when slick combines with uncanny and starts to rot. Many of Rødland's pictures are disturbing fictions that suggest film stills: in a piece titled "This Is My Body," a young girl

gazes up at an unseen man who has one hand at her throat and the other poised at her mouth, as if to dispense communion. Elsewhere bodies are bloodied or deformed, and even inanimate objects appear perverse—note the still-life of bent cutlery and a snarl of hair. Through June 20. (Algus Greenspon, 71 Morton St. 212-255-7872.)

Bert Stern

The first posthumous show of the fashion and celebrity photographer's work—he died in 2013—is a savvy mix of the familiar and the unknown, including contact sheets, proof prints,

Marilyn Monroe, whose 1962 "Last Session" with Stern dominated the rest of his career, shares the spotlight with Kate Moss, Brigitte Bardot, Veruschka, and Sue Lyon, circa "Lolita," who gets almost a wall to herself. (Vladimir Nabokov makes a cameo appearance.) Among the discoveries are a portrait of Marcello Mastroianni, illuminated by his lit cigarette, and Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor sharing a moment. Through June 20 (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway, at Prince St. 212-966-6223.)

Caragh Thuring

The London-based painter wants to

painting here will literally stop you in your tracks: a canvas covered in a thicket of Gottlieb-esque runes hangs from the ceiling, blocking the view of the rest of the gallery. After the opening salvo comes a series of strikingly diverse paintings, including a portrait of three men in their underwear and a window opening onto a garden against a checkerboard of black and burgundy. Untreated linen peeks out from the background of many of these works, a testament to Thuring's apparent conviction that any gaze on the world, however intense, is always fragmented. Through June 21. (Preston, 301 Broome St.

MUSEUMS SHORT LIST Sept. 7. MOMA PS1

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

"Van Gogh: Irises and Roses." Through Aug. 16.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

"Yoko Ono: One Woman Show, 1960-1971." Through

"Simon Denny: The Innovator's Dilemma." Through Sept. 7.

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

"Storylines: Contemporary Art at the Guggenheim.' Opens June 5.

WHITNEY MUSEUM

"America Is Hard to See." Through Sept. 27.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM

"Zanele Muholi: Isibonelo/ Evidence." Through Nov. 1.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

"Nature's Fury: The Science of Natural Disasters." Through Aug. 9.

ASIA SOCIETY

"De/Constructing China: Selections from the Asia Society Museum Collection." Opens June 9.

MORGAN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

"Hidden Likeness: Photographer Emmet Gowin at the Morgan." Through Sept. 20.

NEW MUSEUM

"Albert Oehlen: Home and Garden." Opens June 10.

GALLERIES SHORT LIST

CHELSEA

Ricci Albenda Kreps

535 W. 22nd St. 212-741-8849. Through June 20.

Robert Motherwell

Roser 525 W. 24th St. 212-627-6000. Through June 20.

Garth Weiser Kaplan

121 W. 27th St. 212-645-7335. Through June 20.

DOWNTOWN

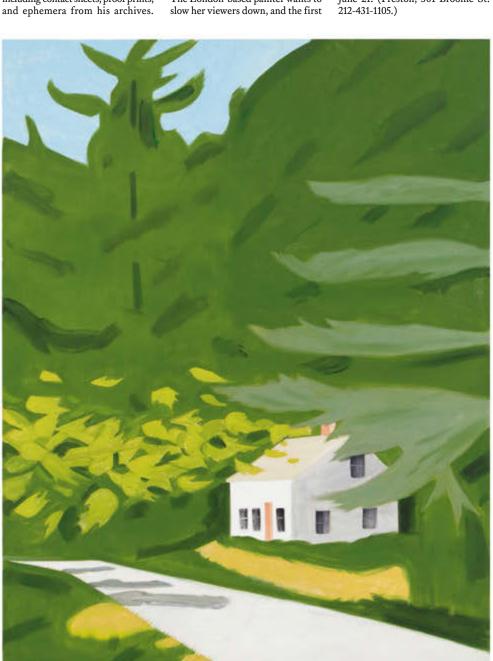
Susan Cianciolo Donahue 99 Bowery. 646-896-1368. Through July 5.

Brie Ruais

Mesler/Feuer 30 Orchard St 212-608-6002.

Through June 14. "Enchanted Space: Anna K.E., Dana Levy, Marilyn

Minter' Fridman 287 Spring St. 212-620-0935. Through June 6.



At eighty-seven, Alex Katz is at the top of his game. His recent paintings (including "Slab City II," above) are on view at Gavin Brown's Enterprise through June 13; in July, he opens shows at the High Museum, in Atlanta, and Colby College, in Maine.

CIASSICAL MUSIC ::

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera Summer Recital Series

Now that the regular season has ended, the grandest of New York's opera companies kicks off its shoes, rolls up its pant cuffs, and heads outdoors. Presenting six free concerts over two weeks in parks across the five boroughs, the series opens in Central Park, with the mezzo-soprano Isabel Leonard, the soprano Janai Brugger, and the house favorite Nathan Gunn, performing selections from "Faust," "Carmen," and "Porgy and Bess," among other works, accompanied by the pianist Dan Saunders. (Central Park SummerStage, south of 72nd St. metopera.org. June 15 at 8. No tickets required.)

On Site Opera

The imaginative company stages Paisiello's "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," a musically straightforward comedy, long overshadowed by Rossini's later, more brilliant version, in the stunning Fabbri Mansion, on the Upper East Side. It's the first entry in O.S.O.'s new series dedicated to Beaumarchais' Figaro trilogy; the company aims to disrupt the audience's familiarity with the plays by presenting lesser-known adaptations of them in nontraditional venues across the city. Monica Yunus, David Blalock, and Andrew Wilkowske take the lead roles; Eric Einhorn directs, and Geoffrey McDonald and Adam Kerry Boyles share conducting duties. (7 E. 95th St. osopera.org. June 9 and June 11-13 at 7:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSESNew York Philharmonic

Jeffrey Kahane, admired both as a conductor and as a pianist, has for many years combined his skills into a celebrated double act. Returning to the Philharmonic, his focus this time is on Mozart, leading the Piano Concertos Nos. 20 and 21 from the keyboard and the Symphony No. 38 ("Prague") from the podium. (June 3-4 at 7:30, June 5 at 11 A.M., and June 6 at 8.) • The Philharmonic concludes its subscription season with a true pièce de résistance: Côme de Bellescize's staging of Arthur Honegger's oratorio "Joan of Arc at the Stake." Calling for actors, singers, orchestra, chorus, and even an ondes Martenot, the work crams an astonishing range of styles into its eighty minutes, from plainchant and Baroque dance to jazz and film scores. The captivating Marion Cotillard stars in the speaking role of the Maid of Orléans, whose life flashes before her eyes in a series of reminiscences while she awaits her execution. (June 10-12 at 7:30 and June 13 at 8.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656.)

New York Philharmonic "Contact!" Series

Often held at the downtown boîte SubCulture, the Philharmonic comes to the Metropolitan Museum's capacious Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium to present the last of the season's new-music events, "Focus on Japan." Conducted by the superb Jeffrey Milarsky (in his Philharmonic début), the ensemble moves to a chamber-orchestra format to offer premières of works by Misato Mochizuki and Dai Fujikura ("Infinite String"), in addition to classics by Takemitsu ("Archipelago S") and Messiaen ("Sept Haïkaï," an ardent tribute to Japanese culture, with the pianist Stephen Gosling). (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949. June 5 at 7.)

St. Petersburg Philharmonic: "Russian Day"

In a move to promote its culture abroad, the Russian Federation will celebrate its national holiday in five cities around the world. New York's Carnegie Hall draws Yuri Temirkanov's famed ensemble, which will be led by its associate conductor, Nikolai Alexeev, in two warhorses, Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony and Shostakovich's Fifth. (212-247-7800. June 12 at 8.)

Juilliard415 with Rachel Podger

Two period-performance authorities, the conductor Masaaki Suzuki and the violinist Rachel Podger, guide Juilliard's fine historical ensemble (along with musicians from London's Royal Academy of Music) in a program that will début at the Boston Early Music Festival and go on to Leipzig's storied Thomaskirche: all Bach, it includes the Double Violin Concerto in D Minor and the "Ascension Oratorio," BWV 11. (Alice Tully Hall. lincolncenter. org. June 15 at 8. Note: In addition, Podger will perform music by Bach, Biber, and Tartini in a solo recital at the Baryshnikov Arts Center on June 14 at 7.)

RECITALS

Tyondai Braxton: "HIVE"

The exuberant young experimental musician, in connection with the release of a new Nonesuch disk, comes to the city's natural home for cutting-edge performance to lead his major work of the past several years, a piece that evolved out of a project about collaboration and technology for the Guggenheim Museum, and has since taken on a life of its own. Braxton and his musicians will perform in an immersive installation by the mixed-media artist Grace Villamil. (512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. June 4-6 at 8.)

Locrian Chamber Players

For some two decades, the Players have found a niche in the Gotham scene by performing only music that is less than ten years old-and each concert offers something interesting. Works by three noted European composers-Kurt Schwertsik (the U.S. première of "Ein Namenloses Streichquartett"), Howard Skempton, and Julian Anderson ("Prayer")—have pride of place this time, alongside music by Andrew List and David Macdonald ("Little Suite"). (10th Floor Performance Space, Riverside Church, 91 Claremont Ave. June 5 at 8. No tickets required.)

Kettle Corn New Music: "Moving Mountains"

Lisa Moore, one of America's leading pianists for contemporary music, offers the final concert of Kettle Corn's season, an evening at the DiMenna Center that features brand-new pieces by Kate Moore, Chris Rogerson ("Noble Pond"), and Stephen Cabell, as well the anchor work, John Luther Adams's "Among Red Mountains." (450 W. 37th St. kettlecornnewmusic.org. June 6 at 7.)

Bargemusic

In a fortnight awhirl with novelty, the floating chamber-music series values tradition. Two brilliant young artists, the cellist Nicholas Canellakis and the pianist Michael Brown, offer a recital featuring beloved works for their combination by Schumann (the Adagio and Allegro, Op. 70), Strauss, Webern, and Chopin (the Sonata for Cello and Piano in G Minor). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. June 6 at 8. For tickets and full schedule, see bargemusic.org.)

Lukas Ligeti Fiftieth Birthday Concerts

Ligeti, a percussionist as well as a composer, has emerged from the long shadow of his formidable father to excel as a musician in the forward line of contemporary culture, mixing minimalist, modernist, jazz, and world-music influences into an effective whole. The Austrian Cultural Forum spearheads two birthday concerts this month: in the first, Ligeti collaborates with such musicians as the percussionist David Cossin and the members of Ligeti's new band, Notebook, in an evening of small-ensemble works written for the occasion. (11 E. 52nd St. June 11 at 7:30. To reserve free tickets, which are required, call 212-319-5300. Note: The Forum will also present another all-Ligeti concert at Brooklyn's Roulette on June 14 at 5:30.)

Chelsea Music Festival

Music, art, and good food combine in this wide-ranging festival, under the leadership of Melinda Lee Masur and Ken-David Masur, now well established downtown. This year's series focusses on the music and culture of Finland and Hungary, showcased in a variety of concerts and other events. A program at Canoe Studios (one of several venues), hits a glamourous note, with music by the sesquicentennial birthday boys Sibelius and Nielsen (performed by such noted musicians as the pianist Helen Huang and the bassoonist Brad Balliett) accompanied by "a culinary-art reception" prepared by the chefs Carl Frederiksen and Sami Tallberg. (601 W. 26th St. June 14 at 6. For tickets and full schedule, see chelseamusicfestival.org. June 12-20.)

OUT OF TOWN

Music Mountain

The summer shrine of the string quartet, under the new leadership of the pianist Jonathan Yates, marks an auspicious start to its summer season, presenting the cellist David Finckel and the pianist Wu Han (the artistic directors of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center), who bring their emphatic style to sonatas for violin and cello by Bach, Brahms (No. 1 in E Minor), Beethoven, and Rachmaninoff. In addition, Wu Han goes solo in Scriabin's Five Preludes, Op. 16. (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126. June 14 at 3.)



New York City Ballet

The season ends with a week of performances of Balanchine's great 1962 work, "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Among the many things to love about this ballet are Mendelssohn's music, which alternates between wit, petulance, and tender emotion, and a touching pas de deux with a man in a donkey mask. That's not to mention the dozens of children from the School of American Ballet, dancing the roles of bugs and butterflies, who fill Shakespeare's forest with movement and light. • June 2-4 at 7:30, June 5 at 8, June 6 at 2 and 8, and June 7 at 3: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." (David H. Koch, Lincoln Center. 212-496-0600.)

American Ballet Theatre

The highlight of this seventy-fifth-anniversary season is the company's new "Sleeping Beauty," in a production by Alexei Ratmansky that looks back in time. A.B.T. also presents another nineteenth-century classic, the exotic "La Bayadère," the tragic story of an Indian temple dancer who dies for love. Starry guests dancing in "Bayadère" include Kimin Kin, of the Mariinsky (June 1); Leonid Sarafanov, of the Mikhailovsky (partnering Natalia Osipova on June 3); and Alina Cojocaru, formerly of the Royal Ballet (June 5). • June 2 and June 4-5 at 7:30, June 3 at 2 and 7:30, and June 6 at 2 and 8: "La Bayadère." • June 8-9 and June 11-12 at 7:30, June 10 at 2 and 7:30, and June 13 at 2 and 8: "The Sleeping Beauty." • June 15-16 at 7:30: "Romeo and Juliet." (Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center. 212-362-6000. Through July 4.)

Brian Brooks Moving Company / Pontus Lidberg Dance

For his part of a shared week at the Joyce, Brooks offers "Counterpoint," "Division," and "Torrent," recent works whose titles accurately forecast the plain ideas that Brooks develops with more craft than imagination or drama. Lidberg, also straightforward, includes falling snow in his "Snow," along with blank masks, a toy boat, a balloon, and a Bunraku-style puppet. In "Written on Water," the movement swirls prettily, but without much weight. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Brooks: June 2-4. Lidberg: June 6-7.)

Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet

The Walmart heiress giveth and the Walmart heiress taketh away. Nancy Laurie founded this New York troupe in 2003, and funded it well, as it attracted technically impressive dancers and gained an international reputation, but now she is pulling out. For the company's final performances, the more promising of two programs features premières by Richard Siegal and Johan Inger, alongside perhaps the best work in the repertory, Crystal Pite's "Ten Duets on a Theme of Rescue" (2008), which is performed in both programs. (BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. June 3-6.)

Kota Yamazaki / Fluid hug-hug

Yamazaki is a mix-and-match choreographer, drawing from Butoh, ballet, West African dance, sundry contemporary techniques, and the diverse backgrounds of the international casts he assembles. "OQ" (the title sounds out the Japanese word for "palace") brings together another motley crew for another enigmatic ritual. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 212-715-1258. June 5-6.)

Yvonne Rainer

Since she returned to choreography, in 2000, after a twenty-five-year hiatus, the eminent postmodernist has specialized in collages of simple movement, heavy music, and dryly recited text: commonplace books set into motion by a game crew of veteran dancers. "The Concept of Dust," receiving its East Coast première, extends a recent thematic interest in aging and mortality. Muslim history, global warming, and melancholy abut jazz hands, pillows, and whimsy. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 212-708-9400. June 9-10 and June 13-14.)

"ROBOT"

What's the difference between man and machine? That question is asked again by the Spanish-born, Paris-based choreographer Blanca Li. Her whimsical show mingles a cast of human dancers with a group of cute, pint-size NAO robots. The humans behave like machines, hooked up to wires; the robots act like people, aspiring to experience love. (BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. June 9-14.)

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

The irresistible dancers of Alvin Ailey are back, with works old, new, and recycled. (As usual, "Revelations" will be performed almost every night.) From Rennie Harris, there is a new hiphop-based dance, "Exodus." Robert Battle, the company's director, presents "No Longer Silent," a sombre exploration of group movement, ritual, and solitary suffering. There's also "Toccata," an excerpt from Talley Beatty's jazzy "Come and Get the Beauty of It Hot" (1960), and "Odetta," Matthew Rushing's affecting tribute to the folk singer Odetta Holmes. (David H. Koch, Lincoln Center. 212-496-0600. June 10-14 and June 16-21.)

Ballet Tech Kids Dance

Forty kids from Ballet Tech, Eliot Feld's tuition-free dance-centric elementary- and middle-school program, perform an all-Feld program at the Joyce. This year's lineup includes the new "A Yankee Doodle," full of kaleidoscopic marching patterns and set to crisp bugle-and-drum music. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. June 11-14.)

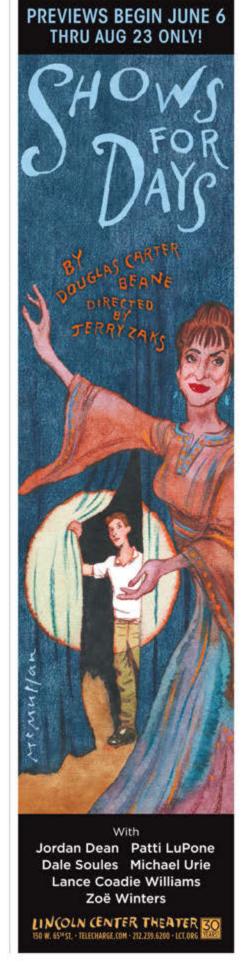
"Works & Process" / Wendy Whelan and Ed Watson

The Royal Ballet dancer Watson and the intrepid former New York City Ballet ballerina Whelan will discuss the seeds of their joint venture—which will include new works by Annie-B Parson, Arthur Pita, and Danièle Desnoyers—with Stanford Makishi, and show excerpts of new work. (Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. 212-423-3575. June 14-15.)

OUT OF TOWN

Jacob's Pillow

This season of dance in the Berkshires begins unconventionally, with the public-radio personality Ira Glass. "Three Acts, Two Dancers, One Radio Host" entertainingly combines "This American Life" style segments with tongue-in-cheek vaudeville dance numbers choreographed by Monica Bill Barnes and performed by Anna Bass and Barnes. Amid silliness, sequins, and confetti, the dancers reflect on long-term partnerships and short careers; the self-deprecating radio host gets personal and joins the dance. (Ted Shawn, Becket, Mass. 413-243-0745. June 13-14.)



> NIGHT LIFE



KEY PLAYER

Olivia Chaney and her harmonium are reinvigorating English folk music.

THE THIRTY-THREE-YEAR-OLD SINGER AND SONGWRITER Olivia Chaney was classically trained at the Royal Academy of Music, but she prefers the barroom to the opera house. She embraces songs about sex, death, unrequited love, and murder, and, following in the tradition of June Tabor, Maddy Prior, and Sandy Denny, has a talent for savvy arrangements. With an earthiness to her expressive soprano, Chaney is bringing the grand tradition of British folk music into the twenty-first century.

Onstage—and on her début album, "The Longest River," which came out in April, on Nonesuch—Chaney moves between a few instruments, including the guitar, the piano, and the harmonium. The latter, a small hand-pumped organ, was prized by English missionaries to India in the mid-nineteenth century, who deployed it as a kind of portable church organ. Somewhat ironically, Indian musicians co-opted the instrument, and it is now used in devotional music indigenous to the subcontinent. "I love its complex history," Chaney said. "It is no longer from one place, really." She discovered the harmonium a few years ago, when she saw an Irish musician busking with one near her house in London. She talked him into teaching her the basics, and then she personalized it. "I've kind of invented my own bellows technique," she said.

Live, Chaney has a casual yet commanding presence. She often performs barefoot, her long dark hair piled high on her head. When she takes her place behind the harmonium to summon its low moaning notes and, with a steely gaze, starts singing, it's as if a mystical spirit has entered the room. It's chilling when she slowly intones "Stand by the roadside/facing the headlights/wait for the break of dawn," on her adaptation of "Blessed Instant," by the Norwegian jazz singer Sidsel Endresen. "Singing is such a deep, affirming thing for me," Chaney said. "The harmonium has to breathe, in a sense, with me. I love how weird it can sound, without any electronics or microphones or special effects." Chaney visits Roulette on June 3 and the Living Room on June 6.

—John Donohue

ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors lead complicated lives; it's advisable to check in advance to confirm engagements.

Baby Dee

A Cleveland native and former New Yorker who now lives in the Netherlands, this sui-generis harpist, pianist, and songwriter has diverse musical roots; she was a longstanding member of the Bindlestiff Family Circus, a bawdy avant-garde troupe, and served for many years as the organist and choir conductor at St. Jerome, a Catholic church in the Bronx. She recently released "I Am a Stick," a whimsical and heartfelt record marked by rhythmic freedom, orchestral touches, and wide-ranging subject matter that includes bighearted odes to the power of love and an insightful meditation on what made a childhood acquaintance such a degenerate. (Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. 212-539-8778. June 3.)

Tyondai Braxton

Last month, the former singer and keyboardist of the experimental rock group Battles released "HIVE1," a beguiling, introspective new record of compositions for acoustic percussion and modular synthesizer. The genesis of the album can be traced back to 2013, when Braxton performed "HIVE," a site-specific piece for the Guggenheim rotunda, which featured five musicians perched on custom-made oval platforms. That same week, he heard "Oktophonie," an eerie, drone-filled electronic work by the German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, at the Park Avenue Armory, which inspired him to reimagine the "HIVE" compositions. The results, which are transfixing, are marked by fragmented percussion grooves that weave in and out of warm analogue soundscapes. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. June 4-6.)

The Dø

Dan Levy and Olivia Merilahti struck out on their own as the Dø after working together on the soundtrack to the French thriller "L'Empire des Loups," from 2005. It's a fitting origin story for a duo whose pop songs often feature climactic builds and spidery, atmospheric compositions. On its third album, "Shake Shook Shaken," the half-Finnish, half-French act, which writes in English, seeks a fresh and expansive sound, ditching the folky eccentricities that highlighted its earlier work in favor of sweeping synths and energetic beats. Fortunately, Merilahti's voice hasn't changed at all—it remains a sulking, squealing soprano prone to lovely tantrums. (Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St. ticketmaster.com. June 10.)

Iceage and Amen Dunes

When the Danish rockers Iceage made their New York début, in 2011, they raised more than a few eyebrows; none of the members were of legal drinking age, and the shows, powered by bleak, nervy post-punk, often ended in puddles of blood onstage and off. In the past four years, the members—especially their brooding vocalist, Elias Bender Rønnenfelt—have become staples in chic coastal cliques whose interests and wardrobes tend toward the obsidian. As they've grown, the music has shifted and mellowed, as has their company: they are joined at this East Williamsburg D.I.Y. space by Damon McMahon's gorgeous, stargazing psych-folk project Amen Dunes. (315 Ten Eyck St., Brooklyn. June 16.)

Zola Jesus

In 2008, a young University of Wisconsin-Madison philosophy student named Nika Roza Danilova

began quietly releasing seven-inch singles on trendy boutique labels. Her maximalist, sulking gloom-pop immediately caught on, mostly because of Danilova's voice, a tremendously powerful soprano honed through years of opera training. Since then, she's released a handful of albums and sharpened her performance skills, as evidenced by a career-defining performance in 2012 at the Guggenheim, which included brilliant costuming by Jenni Hensler. Danilova has evolved from record to record, and, in doing so, has often met the ire of the critical élite. But an openness to new ideas is what sets her apart and makes her such a rewarding vocalist to continually revisit. (Warsaw, 261 Driggs Ave., Brooklyn. 718-387-0505. June 14.)

The Tallest Man on Earth

Kristian Matsson's memorable stage name speaks to the themes of loneliness that percolate in his music lyrically, tonally, and because he has historically performed and recorded alone. But for his fourth album, "Dark Bird Is Home," which was released last month, the Swedish folk singer chose to work with a band. The accompaniment does not detract from Matsson's characteristic intimacy, which is defined by his gravelly and penetrating voice and lilting melodies. With Hiss Golden Messenger, a folk duo from North Carolina featuring former hard-corepunk musicians. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 212-465-6500. June 3.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Blue Note Jazz Festival

The month of June belongs to this festival, which relies on the triedand-true mix of presenting popular acts not normally associated with jazz alongside artists who are less well known but more committed to moving the genre forward. In the former category is the rock-keyboard legend Al Kooper, who is celebrating his seventy-first birthday with a show at the B. B. King Club, on June 4. The blues guitarist **Buddy Guy** is at that club a week later, June 9-11. The soprano Kathleen Battle, accompanied by Cyrus Chestnut, visits the Blue Note on June 11. Among the more daring jazz shows is Joshua Redman and the Bad Plus at the Highline Ballroom, on June 10. The inventive saxophonist and the restless piano trio demonstrated their compatibility on their new album, "The Bad Plus Joshua Redman." Full of genre-blending compositions and crafty rhythms, the record shows that they are jazz outliers who remain primed for adventure. (bluenotejazzfestival. com. Through June 30.)

Alan Cumming

A brilliant actor who has made a specialty of playing morally repellent characters you can't help but love, Cumming plucks at the heartstrings for his début at the Cafe Carlyle: his show is called "Alan Cumming Sings Sappy Songs." Expect an evening of starry-eyed fare delivered with an acid touch. He'll be backed by Lance Horne, on piano; Eleanor Norton, on cello; and Chris Jego, on drums. (Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. 212-744-1600. June 2-13.)

Marquis Hill

The winner of the 2014 Thelonious Monk International Trumpet Competition, Hill built his considerable reputation in Chicago, where he was raised, with performances and recordings that reveal a whip-smart post-bop player who circumvents genre clichés with intuitive wit and poise. He's at the Jazz Gallery with his Blacktet, featuring Christopher McBride, on alto sax; Justin Thomas, on vibraphone; Joshua Ramos, on bass; and Makaya McCraven, on drums. (1160 Broadway, at 27th St., Fifth fl. 646-494-3625. June 11.)

John Hollenbeck

The percussionist, composer, and arranger Hollenbeck may admire the work of Pete Seeger, Burt Bacharach, Cyndi Lauper, and others, but that doesn't mean he treats it as if it were scripture. On his new album, "Songs We Like a Lot," a collaboration with

the Frankfurt Radio Big Band and the vocalists **Theo Bleckmann** and **Kate McGarry**, Hollenbeck radically reshapes tunes like "Close to You" and "True Colors" with impunity. Bleckmann, McGarry, and a sizable New York-based contingent join the leader at Roulette. (509 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn. 917-267-0363. June 10.)

Maria Schneider

The enduring popularity of Schneider's jazz orchestra is a combination of many factors—including the ingenuity of her compositions and arrangements, and the superlative musicianship of her ensemble—but the openhearted lyricism that imbues all of her work may be the most winning component. She celebrates the release of her latest album, "The Thompson Fields," with a run at Birdland. (315 W. 44th St. 212-581-3080. June 2-6.)

Terell Stafford

Stafford's new album, "Brotherlee Love," is a tribute to Lee Morgan, the feistiest trumpeter of the hardbop era, and it reveals a virile edge to his playing. His ensemble at the Village Vanguard June 2-7 includes the saxophonist **Tim Warfield**, the pianist **Bruce Barth**, and the bassist **Peter Washington**, all of whom joined him on the album. **Billy Williams** holds down the drums. (178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. 212-255-4037.)

ABOVE BEYOND

Dark Wonderland

The nonprofit arts producer MAPP International Productions and the Green-Wood Historic Fund are marking the hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland." On Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays this month, visitors to Green-Wood Cemetery, in Brooklyn, will be greeted at its gates by lantern-toting guides, who will lead them in small groups to explore graves, statuary, and rolling expanses with Manhattan views. Musicians, dancers, and actors will be on hand. June 4-6 features the performance artist Sacha Yanow; the alto-saxophonist and composer Andrew D'Angelo; and the guitarist Vernon Reid, who will perform a requiem for Eric Garner. The following week, June 11-13, the poet and performance-art therapist Queen GodIs, the installation artist Arturo Vidich, and the electronic pop band SLV are on tap. Through June 27. (green-wood.com/darkwonderland.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

As is their wont, the auction houses close out the season with sales of antiquities from Europe and the Near East. At Sotheby's, a marble head of Zeus from the second century (mounted on shoulders from the eighteenth) leads the way in an auction on June 3. Other ancient treasures include a basalt Ptolemaic figure of the Horus Falcon—a representation of the Egyptian god of war—and a lithe torso of Aphrodite, in extreme contrapposto, fashioned during the second century B.C. This is followed by a sale of Old Master paintings on June 4, which includes a Netherlandish portrait of the striking Elizabeth of Valois, first betrothed to Prince Carlos of Spain but married off instead to his father, all at the tender age of fourteen (a royal mess that was the subject of Verdi's "Don Carlos"). On June 9, the house offers a sale of twentieth-century design. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212606-7000.) • Christie's follows suit with a sale of Old Masters (June 3) brimming with Dutch landscapes, Flemish still-lifes, Italian religious scenes, and views of Venice. A kneeling statue of Pharaoh Necho II—who, according to Herodotus, commissioned a successful expedition

to circumnavigate Africa—is one of almost two hundred lots being offered at the sale of antiquities the next day (June 4); design objects and jewels come to auction the following week (June 10 and June 16). (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

READINGS AND TALKS

BookCour

Anne Kreamer talks about her new book, "Risk/Reward: Why Intelligent Leaps and Daring Choices Are the Best Career Moves You Can Make." (163 Court St., Brooklyn. 718-875-3677. June 10 at 7.)

"Bellow Centennial Slam"

Viking and Penguin Books, which had a decades-long relationship with Saul Bellow, celebrate the novelist. Adam Kirsch, A. M. Homes, Colum McCann, and other writers will join Beena Kamlani, Bellow's longtime editor, and Deborah Treisman, the fiction editor of this magazine, for an evening of readings, discussions, and refreshments. (Housing Works Bookstore and Café, 126 Crosby St. 212-334-3324. June 10 at 7.)

McNally Jackson Books

Jonathan Galassi, the president and publisher of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, discusses his début novel, "Muse," with the poet and critic Maureen McLane. (52 Prince St. 212-274-1160. June 15 at 7.)





TABLES FOR TWO

STREETBIRD

2149 Frederick Douglass Blvd. (212-206-2557)

THE CHEF MARCUS SAMUELSSON, who was born in Ethiopia, raised by an adoptive family in Sweden, and made famous as the executive chef at Aquavit, in midtown, is madly in love with Harlem. He moved there in 2005, "from a swanky but soulless place in the Time Warner Center at Columbus Circle to a swanky and soulful brownstone apartment," he wrote in his 2012 memoir, "Yes, Chef." The neighborhood, he was delighted to realize, "was not just black U.S.A. in a snow globe; it was one of the last bastions of New York City as creative people long for it to be." In 2010, he opened Red Rooster, a swanky and soulful restaurant on Lenox Avenue, and began to establish himself as Harlem's veritable mayor, enticing local regulars—including, especially, the creative élite—plus visiting V.I.P.s and celebrity-chasing tourists, with an elegantly global menu, effortlessly combining the flavors of the American South, Ethiopia, Sweden, and beyond.

This spring, Samuelsson doubled down on his community outreach and introduced Streetbird, a more casual venture with an emphasis on rotisserie chicken, eaten in or taken out. If, with Red Rooster, Samuelsson tread gingerly as he sought acceptance from the object of his affection, he's confident enough now to shout his adoration from the rooftops. The new place is a lively, endearing but painfully unsubtle homage to Harlem through the decades, from the graffiti on the rafters to the sneakers dangling from the sprinkler system and the booths upholstered in Louis Vuitton and Gucci leather.

The menu, too, is a riot of references: red-velvet waffles and chicken, Return of the Mac (and cheese). But what comes out of the kitchen tends to fall short of its promise. The glossy-skinned rotisserie chicken is proficient but ultimately unspecial. The Sho' Nuff Noodles are an overly faithful ode to take-out lo mein, and the crispy chicken in another vaguely Chinese dish called Mama Said Wok You Out is less exciting than your average General Tso's. Two salads—the Fly Girl and the Grace Jonezz—turn out to be indistinguishable heaps of shredded and underdressed lettuce. If the lesson seems to be that Harlem can't be bottled, there's a certain irony to the fact that Streetbird's condiments are a bright spot, particularly the sweet and spicy Jamerican sauce and the Bird Funk Spread, an oily paste of Chinese sausage, dried shrimp, and fermented black bean, which comes with Auntie's Cornbread. The best dish—the Swediopian, a sort of boat made from spongy Ethiopian injera bread filled with tender, vinegary collards, the hearty Ethiopian chicken stew known as *doro wat*, creamy curds of fresh cheese, and crumbles of hard-boiled egg—is the most creative. What could represent Harlem better than that?

—Hannah Goldfield



BAR TAB SID GOLD'S REQUEST ROOM

165 W. 26th St. (212-229-1948)

The keyboard wizard Joe McGinty is the longtime leader of the downtown music-tribute collective the Loser's Lounge; Paul Devitt is the owner of the Beauty Bar. In early May, they opened this elegant punk-and-pop piano bar, where you can sit in an alcove booth or on a barstool around the piano, drink Hemingway Daiguiris, eat clams casino, and perform anything from Captain & Tennille's "Love Will Keep Us Together" to Joy Division's "Love Will Tear Us Apart." As at a Loser's Lounge show, the mood is both appreciative and wry: shambling, joyous sing-alongs of "Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da" and Cheap Trick's "Surrender" alternate with, say, an impassioned "Lola" or a shy "Lovefool." McGinty, bobbing along at the baby grand, provides backup vocals and says things like "I think we're the only two people who know the words to 'Baby Elephant Walk.'" On a recent Friday night, a group of five shaggily made its way through "Dancing Queen." ("That was the Steubenville, Ohio, cast of 'Mamma Mia!'" McGinty said). One of two talented singers on a moms' night out had planned to sing the Abba song; she did "The Winner Takes It All" instead, slaying everybody. At the end of the night, Devitt, in halfglasses and a Stork Club T-shirt, took a break from racing around working to pick up the mic and sing "Sympathy for the Devil"; McGinty happily did the "whoo-whoo"s.

–Sarah Larson



Open daily for lunch and dinner. Dishes \$7-\$16.



Live in Halian



FINE DINING DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN FINE CHINA.

FROM TABLECLOTH TO SANDWICH SHOP.

S.PELLEGRINO MAKES ANY MEAL AN OCCASION
WITH ITS FINE BUBBLES AND UNIQUE TASTE.



ARE YOU

a ★
FOODIE?

SHOW US WHAT MAKES YOU A FOODIE AT THE INFINITE TABLE.
SANPELLEGRINO.COM



Now in Paperback: The FINAL INSTALLMENT of the MAGICIANS TRILOGY

from #1 New York Times Bestselling Author

LEV GROSSMAN

Praise for the Magicians Trilogy:

"The Magicians is to Harry Potter as a shot of Irish whiskey is to a glass of weak tea. . . . Hogwarts was never like this."

-GEORGE R. R. MARTIN



"Sad, hilarious, beautiful & essential to anyone who cares about modern fantasy." $_{
m IOE\; HILL}$

"A very knowing and wonderful take on the wizard school genre."

—JOHN GREEN

"The Magicians may just be the most subversive, gripping, and enchanting fantasy novel I've read this century."

—CORY DOCTOROW

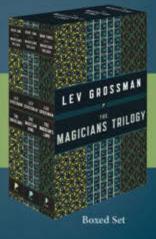
Don't miss the first two "dazzling, erudite and thoughtful" books in the "best fantasy trilogy of the decade."



Book 1



Book 2





LevGrossman.com





*Gary Shteyngart **Charles Stross



THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT TELLING THE STORY

year ago, at the Cannes film festival, Leila Hatami, an Iranian movie star best known in this country for her role in "A Separation," was walking the red carpet, wearing a gold-embroidered turban and a matching long-sleeved dress, when she encountered Gilles Jacob, the festival's president. She reached out to shake his hand, but he kissed her on the cheek, and that, as the Washington Post's Tehran correspondent, Jason Rezaian, wrote, is when the "fuss" began back home. Certain factions in Iran had portrayed the kiss as an affront to Islam; a student group called for the actress to be publicly flogged. Rezaian, a thirty-nine-year-old Californian who had been working in Iran for six years, wrote that Hatami had apologized in a statement in which she said that she regretted "hurting the feelings of some people." She had not wanted to be kissed. Jacob, she said, had simply forgotten the "rules."

Eight weeks after the story ran, Rezaian himself was under arrest in Tehran, and it was hard to say what rules he may have transgressed—no charges were made public. His writing about Iran had been marked by cultural generosity and care. One of the last stories he wrote before he was jailed

was about Iran's tiny but emerging base-ball scene, in which he described the players' love of the game and the impact of the economic sanctions on their aspirations. ("Catcher's mitts and gloves for left-handers are scarce.") Rezaian is a dual citizen—his father was Iranian—and those who know him say that he did not intend to insult or injure Iran, though he had no interest in whitewashing it, either; another recent *Post* story he wrote was about how government mismanagement had precipitated a water crisis.

Rezaian's wife, Yeganeh Salehi, who is an Iranian citizen and a reporter for the *National*, an English-language newspaper based in Abu Dhabi, was arrested at the same time. She was even-

tually released on bail, but for the past ten months Rezaian has been held at the Evin prison, which is notorious for its many executions and its abuse of political prisoners. His mother, Mary Rezaian, was allowed just two brief visits with him five months ago, and he has spent a substantial amount of time in solitary confinement. Joel Simon, of the Committee to Protect Journalists, has called him the victim of a "judicial kidnapping."

Rezaian's trial began last Tuesday, just a few weeks after his family finally learned what crimes he may have been charged with: espionage, collaborating with hostile governments, and "propaganda against the establishment." Even then, the news came through a lawyer whom Rezaian had not chosen and who has met with him only briefly. The proceedings, held in Revolutionary Court Branch 15, are off limits to the public. The charges, which carry a possible sentence of up to twenty years, have no apparent basis in fact—which may be why the government is choosing to pillory in secret a man whose profession was openness. The judge, Abolghassem Salavati, is known for condemning dissidents to death and for having presided over a mass trial in which

scores of activists and journalists were compelled to give televised confessions. In Rezaian's case, after a few hours of questioning behind closed doors, Salavati adjourned the trial indefinitely. Martin Baron, the executive editor of the *Post*, said in a statement, "There is no justice in this system, not an ounce of it, and yet the fate of a good, innocent man hangs in the balance."

The months of Rezaian's imprisonment have also been a period of intense nuclear negotiations between the United States and Iran. One theory is that Rezaian is being held to give the Iranians leverage in the talks, or, since some elements of the government feel that President Hassan Rouhani is



conceding too much, to sabotage them. Mohammad Javad Zarif, the foreign minister and the lead nuclear negotiator, who dealt with Rezaian as a reporter before his arrest, said in April that he hoped "my friend Jason" would be acquitted, but he also insinuated that American intelligence might have "tried to take advantage" of Rezaian. This may be interpreted as the expedient equivocating of a nonetheless reform—minded official, but it is not reassuring. The opacity of the Iranian system makes it hard to sort out the various motives.

When a journalist is put on trial for doing his job, there are two kinds of attacks on the truth. The first is an effort to suppress particular ideas and information. Rezaian seems to have an instinct for how stories of all kinds can orient us in the midst of politicized cacophony. The second takes the form of an expressed preference for lies. When a judge demands testimony that he knows is false to prove a crime he knows has been concocted, he is rejecting the idea that there is value in searching for the truth. This is the inverse of journalism.

Rezaian is not alone. The Committee to Protect Journalists' year-end census counted thirty journalists in Iranian prisons, out of two hundred and twenty-one imprisoned worldwide. The tally included forty-four in China and twenty-three in Eritrea, a country of little more than six million people. This

was the second-highest count since the C.P.J. began keeping track, in 1990. (The United States is not on the current list, but that is not necessarily a reason for complacency; lately, the government has been aggressively pursuing investigative reporters' sources, under the Espionage Act.) Prosecution is not the only threat: this year began with journalists being killed in a magazine office in Paris, because gunmen objected to their cartoons. That was followed by less well-known cases, such as the death, in March, of Danilo López, a Guatemalan reporter who was shot in a park after writing stories about local corruption. Changes in the news industry have also meant that wars are being covered by increasingly vulnerable free-lancers, equipped with barely more than smartphones. Rezaian worked freelance for years before the *Post* hired him.

The *Post* applied for a visa so that one of its editors could attend Rezaian's trial, but the request went unanswered. His wife is still in Iran, and she may go on trial soon. His mother is in the country, too. Even after learning that the proceedings would be closed, the paper reported, she went to the courthouse so that when Jason arrived he would see her. She waited for hours, but he was taken in and out through a back entrance. He may not even have known that she was there.

—Amy Davidson

INK YOURS TRULY



Tarper Lee's published output is about to be doubled: on July 14th, HarperCollins will bring out "Go Set a Watchman," which is being described by the publisher as a sequel to "To Kill a Mockingbird." ("Mockingbird" came out in 1960; "Watchman," though set later, was written earlier.) "Watchman" went to the top of Amazon's best-seller list as soon as its impending publication was announced, propelled by readers' enduring affection for Lee's singular novel, and by an equally enduring fascination with an author who has, for the most part, declined to live a public life, even while her work is considered cherished public property.

This interest in Lee—who is eightynine and reportedly compromised by various ailments, and who resides in an assisted-living facility near Monroeville, Alabama, her home town—no doubt also accounts for the forthcoming appearance, at Christie's, of a handful of her personal letters, which will be auctioned on June 12th. The letters were written

to the late Harold G. Caufield, an architect in New York, and to their circle of friends, which included her early patrons Michael and Joy Brown. (As a Christmas gift in 1956, the couple pledged to fund Lee for a year so that she could work on her fiction.) Lee's personal letters rarely emerge on the market; Charles J. Shields, the author of "Mockingbird: A Portrait of Harper Lee," says that he had access to very few of them while researching his book. The half-dozen letters are being sold by a private collector, who acquired them a few years ago. Christie's pre-sale estimate is a hundred and fifty thousand to two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

The letters, which Lee wrote from Monroeville and sometimes signed with comic aliases—"Francesca da Rimini," "the Prisoner of Zenda"—are chatty and fond. The earliest predate the publication of "To Kill a Mockingbird," and were written while Lee was in Alabama after returning from New York in order to help care for her ailing father, A. C. Lee. In one, dated June 16, 1956, she writes, "I've done things for him that I never remotely thought I'd be called on to do for anybody, not even the Brown infants, but I suppose there is truth in the adage that you don't mind it if they're yours." In another, undated letter, Lee writes poignantly of sitting at the kitchen table with her father, a small-town lawyer who is commonly taken to be the model for Atticus Finch, in "Mockingbird": "I found myself staring at his handsome old face, and a sudden wave of panic flashed through me, which I think was an echo of the fear and desolation that filled me when he was nearly dead."

The letters also convey Lee's amused impatience with her home town, whose sometimes stifling contours she drew upon to describe Maycomb, the setting for "Mockingbird." "A Monroeville election is perhaps the most complicated token of democracy to be found," she writes, during one election season. "To begin with, everyone is kin to everyone who's running, and everyone is against everyone running who is kin to them, if you follow me." She describes being asked on a date by a Presbyterian minister, whom she turns down: "I don't trust myself to keep my mouth shut ... it will get out all over Monroeville that I am a member of the NAACP, which God forbid." And she laments her lack of productivity, compared with her industriousness in New York. "I feel like pulling a Mike and checking into a hotel," she writes, presumably a reference to her friend Michael Brown, who was a composer and lyricist. "But it wouldn't work in Monroeville. Monroeville would simply follow."

Michael Morrison, the president and

publisher of HarperCollins USA, says, "Harold was Nelle's close friend." (Her full name was Nelle Harper Lee.) "She was a prolific writer of letters; she wrote to her friends constantly." He added, "I doubt that she would be very happy to hear that the letters are being sold."The two letters in the cache that were written after the publication of "To Kill a Mockingbird" suggest Lee's pleasure at its reception: she asks Caufield to convey her gratitude to the editor of a publication in which it was reviewed, while acknowledging that "one is not supposed to be aware that critics, reviewers, and English teachers exist." But the final letter, dated November 21, 1961, hints at the beginning of Lee's long career of nonpublication. She tells Caufield that Esquire has turned down an article she submitted because, she says, the editor did not believe that there were segregationists who also despised the Ku Klux Klan. "This is an axiomatic impossibility, according to Esquire!" she writes. "I wanted to say that according to those lights, nine-tenths of the South is an axiomatic impossibility."

—Rebecca Mead

THE MUSICAL LIFE FARE THEE WELL



Bob Weir visited New York recently to prepare for the Fare Thee Well tour, the reunion, last performance, and pension plan of the surviving members of the Grateful Dead, the others being the bass player Phil Lesh and the drummers Mickey Hart and Bill Kreutzmann. Weir was rehearsing with Trey Anastasio, the guitar player from Phish, who will occupy the role of the band's lead guitarist, which, to use a theatre term, was created by Jerry Garcia. Weir and Anastasio met for a few days in a studio on an upper floor of a building in the far West Fifties, where the car dealers are.

It was their fourth set of meetings. "We holed up for three days in early March, out in Stinson, where I have a cottage on the beach," Weir said, meaning Stinson Beach, in Northern California. "Me and Bob and two archtop

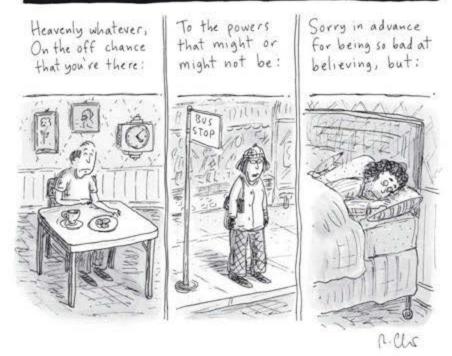
guitars," Anastasio said, a few days later. Weir said that Anastasio "then came out to the Coast for a day to work with Phil and me. Then we put in another three days. He's also hired this kid named Jeff Tanski, who's a kind of wunderkind of the Broadway world, a keyboard player, who's written charts to seventy of our songs. He's really bearing down on this."

"Ninety! And by the time we're done I bet it's a hundred," Anastasio said. "I'm doing this because I don't want to be the problem. Bob and I joked that the first song I sing ought to be 'Dire Wolf,' which has the chorus 'Don't murder me."

Weir was waiting one evening for a taxi in front of his hotel. He was on his way to dinner. There was a line of hotel guests ahead of him, so, after politely answering questions from a reporter for TMZ, he walked to a nearby avenue to catch a cab downtown. "We're going to take as many tunes for a stroll as we can," he said in the cab. "I know basically what I'm up to, but whatever I'm playing is going to be subtly altered by what Trey plays. If Jerry was developing a solo, I could intuit where he was headed, and as long as I played coy and like I didn't really get what he was getting at, then, when he arrived at that place, I could be there with a strong leading tone that would necessarily take where he was going somewhere else. Most often, it delighted him. Sometimes it enraged him."

On the tour, the band will probably play eighteen songs in a show, Weir said. "Most nights, the stadiums are giving us five hours, but I'm not sure we're going to last for five hours," he said. "Even back in the late sixties and early seventies, we didn't play for five hours on many nights, despite being famous for doing that. You do it one time, and you get famous for it."

The cab delivered Weir to an old private club in midtown. Only two other tables in the dining room were occupied, and no one paid any attention to him. He said that, while the Grateful Dead were known for their improvisations, "the playing was done in the service of the songs." In the case of "Dark Star," a chordal vamp, "the lyric suggested a landscape and topography that we then explored, often to our wonderment.""The Other One,"built on a rampaging modal figure, "was an adventure movie. In 'Wharf Rat'"—a story told by a vagrant, which Anastasio likens to "a piece of film noir"—"we poked around the desolate streets of Skid Row. We all inhabited the stories. If we weren't singing, then we were telling the story with



our hands. If I was singing, then I wasn't even there. I stepped out of my body and let the character own it. There's a lot of playing being done, but it was the drama of the event, the parade of characters that came out and told their stories, that held people's attention."

After dinner, at his hotel, Weir played for a friend a recording of himself singing a cowboy lament called "Blue Mountain." At fifteen, Weir worked the summer at the Bar Cross Ranch, in Wyoming, which was owned by the parents of his



Bob Weir and Trey Anastasio

friend John Perry Barlow, who became a Grateful Dead lyricist. The bunkhouse at the Bar Cross is where Weir first heard "Blue Mountain." He would "play guitar, and the cowboys would sing, and I would try to figure out the chords," he said. "Either I'd get it right or they'd say, 'Nah, kid, that's not the way it goes." After the song was finished, he excused himself, saying that he had to travel in the morning up the Hudson to Rhinebeck, to record in a studio there, and he had to be up early to catch a train.

—Alec Wilkinson

PENCILS DOWN DEPT. ON BROADWAY



In the late nineteen-nineties, Elise Engler asked an upstairs neighbor a vexing philosophical question: Is a safety pin a thing? Engler is an artist, and she was working on a sequence of drawings

called "Everything I Own," and the answer to the safety-pin question would affect the size and the character of the finished work. (She owned a lot of safety pins.) In the end, she and the neighbor, Mark Getlein, the author of the textbook "Living with Art," decided that a safety pin is not a thing, but a box of safety pins is. That was a help. Still, the resulting piece, which she executed in pencil and colored pencil, covers eightyfive square feet. It consists of thirteen thousand one hundred and twenty-seven individual images, many of them no larger than a largish postage stamp: an expansive and almost endlessly ponderable self-portrait in stuff.

"Everything I Own" was a watershed work for Engler. Since finishing it, she has made a number of what she calls "list drawings," including a series depicting the contents of the purses of sixty-five different women. "That was really a collaboration," she said not long ago. "Sometimes people would take things out before I started drawing, because they didn't want them in the picture, and sometimes, I think, they would put things in. Like, I did the purse of a fifteen-year-old girl, and there was a condom in the bag, and I'm pretty sure she added it to impress me." Engler also began drawing the contents of her suitcase whenever she went on a trip. In 2009, she was chosen by the National Science Foundation to spend two months as an artist-in-residence in Antarctica, and the body of work she produced during that project includes detailed pictorial inventories of her luggage, both going and coming. She said, "You can't buy anything at the South Pole, of course, and I had to deal with two seasons, because we left from New Zealand, where it was summer. But most of what I took was art supplies."

Engler is fifty-eight. She has slightly unruly curly hair, which she stopped dyeing after a boyfriend told her he liked it gray. She has lived in Manhattan for most of her life, usually within a block or so of Broadway. A little more than a year ago, she decided that it would be interesting to draw each of Broadway's two hundred and fifty-odd blocks. "I thought it would take five years," she said. "But I have a photographer friend who told me, 'You can't do a project that takes five years—that's ridiculous!'"

During the first month, she managed to cover twenty blocks, and realized that if she paced herself she could do it in a single year. She also realized that, if she began at both ends and worked toward the middle, she could finish on her own block, at West 107th Street.

On a recent evening, a group of Engler's friends and neighbors gathered at the northern tip of Straus Park, where Broadway meets West End Avenue, to watch her begin the last panel, exactly three hundred and sixty-five days after she began the project. She had chosen that particular spot because by sitting there and facing east she could include in the picture the windows of her studio, which occupies what was probably meant to be her apartment's living room. She began by sketching with a pencil, then switched to watercolor for some mildly ominous clouds above her building. "Back at home, I'll finish this with colored pencil," she said. In its completed form, "A Year on Broadway" will require slightly more than the available wall space at Robert Henry Contemporary, the gallery that sells her work: it's just six inches high but roughly a hundred and twenty feet wide. Groups of friends took turns looking over Engler's shoulder as she worked, or crouched on the sidewalk in front of her and took pictures with their phones. Getlein the neighbor, author, and safety-pin philosopher—said, "It's like Courbet's picture 'The Painter's Studio."

When Engler decided that she'd done enough, the group applauded, then accompanied her back to her apartment. She pinned the panel she'd been working on in its place on the wall of her studio, and retrieved several bottles of Prosecco from a neighbor's refrigerator. Then she joined a group of people studying the completed sequence. Someone said, "This is Columbia, right here," then added, "Oh, no, this may be Columbia." Engler said, "I'm a Broadway expert now. I would scout blocks before I drew them, so I really got to know it." She pointed to a pair of panels depicting the upper halves of several buildings. "I mean, look at those rooftops. Who knew we had rooftops like that?" A woman standing near Engler's drawing board said, "I love uptown—it's so red. Downtown is so brown."

—David Owen



In the 1930s and 1940s, documentaries by Pare Lorentz brought America's attention to rural poverty and environmental devastation.

His widow, scriptwriter Elizabeth Meyer Lorentz, started a fund in **The New York Community Trust** to underwrite documentaries. Recent films investigate topics including rape on campuses, Native Alaskans facing climate change, and the dangers of mountaintopremoval mining in Appalachia.

Year after year, the Lorentz Fund supports powerful storytelling. All because Elizabeth Meyer Lorentz trusted The Trust.

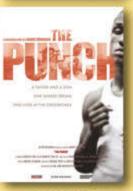


Set up a fund to keep your passions alive - forever.

Call Jane Wilton at 212.686.2563

nycommunitytrust.org





A FEW OF THE FILMS UNDERWRITTEN BY

THE FINANCIAL PAGE EASTERN EXCHANGES

Last week didn't start well for Beijing Baofeng Technology Company. An online-video company whose products include a cheap virtual-reality headset, it saw its stock tumble twelve per cent over two days of trading, after Chinese regulators said that they were looking into possible share-price manipulation on the ChiNext board of the Shenzhen Exchange, where Baofeng trades. Still, Baofeng shareholders can't really complain. The company went public just two months ago, and in the first thirty-four days of trading its stock rose by ten per cent every single day except one. Even after the recent stumble, Baofeng is up twenty-five hundred per cent this year.

Baofeng isn't an outlier, either. Of seventeen hundred stocks on the Shenzhen Exchange, only four have fallen this year, and more than a hundred have seen their shares rise more than five hundred per cent. The Shenzhen Index as a whole has doubled since January, and is up more than two hundred per cent in the past year. The action on China's other major stock exchanges—in Shanghai and Hong Kong hasn't been quite as torrid, but they've had their share of extraordinary winners. The Shanghai Composite Index has risen a hundred and forty per cent since this time last year. In Hong Kong, Jicheng Umbrella Holdings (which makes, yes, umbrellas) went public in February: its shares are up almost seventeen hundred per cent.

There's something weird about these success stories, because these are tough times for the Chinese economy. The government has pegged this year's G.D.P. growth rate at seven per cent—the slowest rate in decades—and independent studies suggest that the real number is well below that. Exports, which are almost forty per cent of the economy, fell fifteen per cent in April. Industrial earnings fell, too, in the most recent quarter. The country is also facing the fallout from a huge borrowing spree—between 2007 and 2014, the total debt load quadrupled. A McKinsey study suggests that Chinese companies are currently spending more on interest payments than they are earning in profits. This should all be bad news for stocks. Yet prices just keep going up.

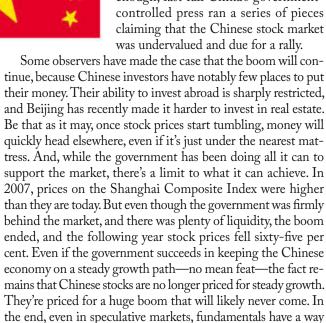
Why the disconnect? "China has never been a market driven by economic fundamentals," Michael Pettis, a professor of finance at Peking University, told me. "It's always been a speculative market." In most markets, you have a mixture of fundamental investors, arbitrageurs, and speculators. But in China the dearth of reliable macroeconomic and corporate data makes it very hard to be a fundamental investor. As a result, Pettis said, "the market is dominated by speculative investors. They

buy when they think something is going to happen that may drive prices up tomorrow." Right now, credit is easy, and the government is doing all it can to keep the market booming, by cutting interest rates and increasing spending. So speculators are buoyant, and they're buying.

Speculative markets can meander along, as China's did between 2010 and 2014. The danger is that, when they start to boom, they take on a life of their own and you end up with a bubble. As Robert Shiller, a professor of economics at Yale and the author of "Irrational Exuberance," puts it, during a bubble "news of price increases spurs investor enthusiasm, which spreads by psychological contagion from person to person," drawing in more and more investors, who buy simply because they believe that others will buy, at even higher prices, tomorrow.

That sounds a lot like China today. The market's ascent has been propelled by a flood of new money, much of it from inexperienced investors. Fourteen million new trading accounts were opened last year, and, according to one study, two-thirds

of those who opened accounts never finished high school. Investors are also increasingly relying on borrowed money to buy stocks, which hugely amplifies the risk of investing. Either these investors don't see the Chinese market as precarious at all—a quintessential sign of a bubble—or they believe they'll be quick enough to avoid the crash. Pettis told me about acquaintances who have been speculating: "They're aware of the risks, but, as one said, I'm going to get out before it starts to fall." Then, too, Shiller has argued, the media plays an important role in inflating bubbles, and, sure enough, last fall China's governmentcontrolled press ran a series of pieces claiming that the Chinese stock market was undervalued and due for a rally.



of asserting themselves, and, when they do, no umbrella maker

in China is going to be worth \$1.2 billion.

—James Surowiecki



"I WANT AN INVESTMENT PLAN FOCUSED ON MY NEEDS, NOT ON FEES."

iShares Funds can help you keep more of what you earn.

STRENGTHEN YOUR PORTFOLIO WITH ISHARES CORE FUNDS.

Low cost. 1/10th the cost of a typical mutual fund.1

Tax efficient. 95% of iShares Funds did not pay capital gains taxes in 2014.3

Diversified. Access a range of investments in a single fund.

So what do I do with my money?*

Visit iShares.com and speak with your financial advisor.



iShares

BlackRock is trusted to manage more money than any other investment firm in the world.

1. Morningstar, as of 12/31/14. Comparison is between the Prospectus Net Expense Patio for the everage Shares Core Series ETFs (0.12%) and the everage Open-End Mutual, Fund (1.27%) available in the U.S. 2. BlackRock, as of 12/31/14. 3. Based on \$4.774T in AUM as of 3/31/15. Visit www.iShares.com or www.BlackRock.com to view a prospectus, which includes investment objectives, risks, fees, expenses and other information that you should read and consider carefully before investing. Risk includes principal loss. Small-cap comparies are more volatile and less liquid than larger capitalization companies. Transactions in shares of ETFs will result in trokerage commissions and will generate tax consequences. All regulated investment companies are obliged to distributions portfolio gars to shareholders. Past distributions not indicative of future distributions. Diversification may not protect against market risk or principal loss. Funds distribution by BlackRock loss (BRL). The IShares Funds are not sponsored, endorsed, issued, solid or promoted by S&P Dow. Jones Indices LLC IS&P), nor does this company make any representation regarding the advisability of investings in the Punds. BRL in and affiliated with S&P. (@2015 BlackRock, Inc., or its subsidiaries, BLACKROCK and SO WHAT DOI DO WITH MY MONEY are registered trademarks of BlackRock, Inc., or its subsidiaries. IS-14049-0415



t had been a very long time since he'd been responsible for another human. Never had he organized travel for himself or anybody. But it was his fault they were all three in the city, and so it fell to him. There was perhaps even something a little exciting about discovering, for the first time in his life, that he was not useless, that his father was wrong, and in fact he was capable. He called Elizabeth first.

"I'm in a state of terror," Elizabeth said.

"Wait," Michael said, hearing a beep on the line. "Let me bring in Marlon."

"The world's gone crazy!" Elizabeth said. "I can't even believe what I'm looking at!"

"Hi, Marlon," Michael said.

"So—where are we?" Marlon said.
"'Where are we?'" Elizabeth said.
"We're in a state of terror, that's where we are."

"We're all right," Marlon grumbled. He sounded far away. "We'll handle it."

Michael could hear Marlon's TV in the background. It was tuned to the same channel Michael was watching, but only Michael could see the images on the screen replicated simultaneously through his own window, a strange doubling sensation, like when you stand on a stage and look up at yourself on the Jumbotron. Elizabeth and Marlon were staying uptown; normally Michael, too, would be staying uptown—until five days ago he'd almost never set foot below Forty-second Street. Everyone—his

brothers and sisters, all his West Coast friends-had warned him not to go downtown. It's dangerous downtown, it's always been that way, just stick with what you know, stay at the Carlyle. But because the helipad near the Garden had, for some reason, been out of commission it had been decided he should stay downtown, for reasons of proximity and to avoid traffic. Now Michael looked south and saw a sky darkened with ash. The ash seemed to be moving toward him. Downtown was really so much worse than anyone in L.A. could even begin to imagine.

"Some things you *can't* handle," Elizabeth said. "I'm in a state of terror."

"There are no flights allowed," Michael said, trying to feel capable, filling them in. "No one can charter. Not even the very important people."

"Bullshit!" Marlon said. "You think Weinstein's not on a plane right now? You think Eisner's not on a plane?"

"Marlon, in case you've forgotten," Elizabeth said, "I am also a Jew. Am I on a plane, Marlon? Am I on a plane?"

Marlon groaned. "Oh, for Chrissake. I didn't mean it that way."

"Well, how the hell *did* you mean it?"

Michael bit his lip. The truth was, these two dear friends of his were both closer friends to him than they were to each other, and there were often these awkward moments when he had to remind them of the love thread that connected all three, which, to Michael, was so obvious; it was woven from a shared suffering, a unique form of suffering, that few people on this earth have ever known or will ever have the chance to experience, but which all of them-Michael, Liz, and Marlon—happened to have undergone to the highest degree possible. As Marlon sometimes said, 'The only other guy who knew what this feels like got nailed to a couple of planks of wood!" Sometimes, if Elizabeth wasn't around, he would add, "By the Jews," but Michael tried not to linger on these aspects of Marlon, preferring to remember the love thread, for that was all that really mattered, in the end.

"I think what Marlon meant—"

Michael began, but Marlon cut him off: "Let's focus here! We've got to focus!"

"We can't fly," Michael said quietly. "I don't know why, really. That's just what they're saying."

"I'm packing," Elizabeth said, and down the line came the sound of something precious smashing on the floor. "I don't even know what I'm packing, but I'm packing."

"Let's be rational about this," Marlon said. "There's a lot of car services. I can't think of any right now. On TV you see them. They've got all kinds of names. Hertz? That's one. There must be others."

"I am truly in a state of terror," Elizabeth said.

"You said that already!" Marlon shouted. "Get ahold of yourself!"

"I'll try and call a car place," Michael said. "The phones down here are kind of screwy." On a pad he wrote, *Hurts*.

"Essentials only," Marlon said, referring to Liz's packing. "This is not the fucking QE2. This is not fucking cocktail hour with good old Dick up in Saint-Moritz. Essentials."

"It'll be a big car," Michael murmured. He hated arguments.

"It'll sure as hell have to be," Elizabeth said, and Michael knew she was being sarcastic and referring to Marlon's weight. Marlon knew it, too. The line went silent. Michael bit his lip some more. He could see in the vanity mirror that his lip looked very red, but then he remembered that he had permanently tattooed it that color.

"Elizabeth, listen to me," Marlon said, in his angry but controlled mumble, which gave Michael an inappropriate little thrill; he couldn't help it, it was just such classic Marlon. "Put that goddam Krupp on your pinkie and let's get the fuck out of here."

Marlon hung up.

Elizabeth started crying. There was a beep on the line.

"I should probably take that," Michael said.

At noon, Michael put on his usual disguise and picked up the car in an underground garage near Herald Square. At 12:27 P.M., he pulled up in front of the Carlyle.

"Jesus Christ that was fast," Marlon said. He was sitting on the sidewalk, on one of those portable collapsible chairs you sometimes see people bring along when they camp outside your hotel all night in the hope that you'll step out onto the balcony and wave to them. He wore a funny bucket hat like a fisherman's, elasticated sweatpants, and a huge Hawaiian shirt.

"I took the superfast river road!" Michael said. He didn't mean to look too smug about it, given the context, but he couldn't help but be a little bit proud.

Marlon opened a carton he had on his lap and took out a cheeseburger. He eyed the vehicle.

"I hear you drive like a maniac."

"I do go fast, Marlon, but I also stay in control. You can trust me, Marlon. I promise I will get us out of here."

Michael felt really sad seeing Marlon like that, eating a cheeseburger on the sidewalk. He was so fat, and his little chair was under a lot of strain. The whole situation looked very precarious. This was also the moment when he noticed that Marlon wasn't wearing any shoes.

"Have you seen Liz?" Michael asked. "What *is* that hunk of junk, anyway?" Marlon asked.

Michael had forgotten. He leaned over and took the manual out of the glove compartment.

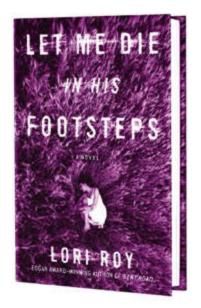
"A Toyota Camry. It's all they had." He was about to add "with a roomy back seat" but thought better of it.

"The Japanese are a wise people," Marlon said. Behind Marlon, the doors of the Carlyle opened and a bellboy emerged walking backward with a tower of Louis Vuitton luggage on a trolley and Elizabeth at his side. She was wearing a lot of diamonds: several necklaces, bracelets up her arms, and a mink stole covered with so many brooches it looked like a pin cushion.

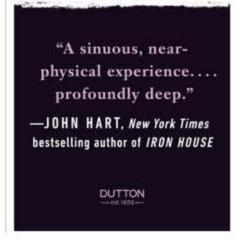
"You have got to be kidding me," Marlon said.

A logician? A negotiator? Michael did not usually have much call to think of himself in this way. But now, back on the road and speeding toward Bethlehem, he allowed the thought that people had always overjudged and misunderestimated him and maybe in the end you don't really know a person until that





Edgar Award-winner
Lori Roy revives the
Southern Gothic with
a powerful story of
family secrets, young
love, and an evil passed
between generations.



person is truly tested by a big event, like the apocalypse. Of course, people forgot he'd been raised a Witness. In one way or another, he'd been expecting this day for a long, long time. Still, if anyone had told him, twenty-four hours ago, that he would be able to convince Elizabethshe who once bought a seat on a plane for a dress so it could meet her in Istanbul—to join him on an escape from New York, in a funky old Japanese car, abandoning five of her Louis Vuitton cases to a city under attack, well, he truly wouldn't have believed it. Who knew he had such powers of persuasion? He'd never had to persuade anyone of anything, least of all his own genius, which was, of course, a weird childhood gift he'd never asked for and which had proved impossible to give back. Maybe even harder was getting Marlon to agree that they would not stop again for food until they hit Pennsylvania. He leaned forward to see if there were any more enemy combatants in the sky. There were not. He and his friends were really escaping! He had taken control and was making the right decisions for everybody! He looked across at Liz, in the passenger seat: she was calm, at last, but her eyeliner continued to run down her beautiful face. So much eyeliner. Everything Michael knew about eyeliner he'd learned from Liz, but

now he realized he had something to teach her on the subject: make it permanent. Tattoo it right around the tear ducts. That way, it never runs.

"Am I losing my mind?" Marlon asked. "Or did you say Bethlehem?"

Michael adjusted the rearview mirror until he could see Marlon, stretched out on the back seat, reading a book and breaking into the emergency Twinkies, which Michael thought they had all agreed to save till Allentown.

"It's a town in Pennsylvania," Michael said. "We'll stop there, eat, and then we'll go again."

"Are you reading?" Elizabeth asked. "How can you be reading at this moment?"

"What should I be doing?" Marlon inquired, somewhat testily. "Shakespeare in the Park?"

"I just don't understand how a person can be reading when their country is under attack. We could all die at any moment."

"If you'd read your Sartre, honey, you'd know that was true at all times in all situations."

Elizabeth scowled and folded her twinkling hands in her lap. "I just don't see how a person can read at such a time."

"Well, Liz," Marlon said, laying it



"So Jolly Roger is in fact Miserable Roger."

STORYLIGES









BELOVED WRITERS RESPOND TO BOLD ART

Jun 5-Sept 9

Supported in part by Culture.pl, the Juliet Lea Hillman Simonds Foundation. Rachel and Jean-Pierre Lehmann, the exhibition's Leadership Committee, and the International Director's Council.

JOHN ASHBERY on R.H. Quaytman

MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM

on Danh Vo

NEIL GAIMAN on Natascha Sadr Haghighian

JONATHAN LETHEM on Rachel Harrison JOYCE CAROL OATES

on Taryn Simon

ANNIE PROULX on Maurizio Cattelan

MEG WOLITZER on Carol Bove

AND MORE:

guggenheim.org/storylines

Clockwise from top: Agnieszka Kurant, Phantom Library (detail), 2011–2012: Nate Lowman, Safe Travels (detail), 2013: Zanele Muholi, Zimaseka "Zim" Salusalu..., 2011: Maurizio Cattelan, Daddy Daddy, 2008. GUGGENHEIM

on thick, "let me enlighten you. See, I guess I read because I am what you'd call a reader. Because I am interested in *the life of the mind*. I admit it. I don't even have a screening room: no, instead I have a library. Imagine that! Imagine that! Because it happens that my highest calling in life is not to put my fat little hands in a pile of sandy shit outside Grauman's—"

"Oh, brother, here we go."

"Because I actually aspire to comprehend the ways and inclinations of the human—"

"These people are trying to kill us!" Liz screamed, and Michael felt it was really time to intervene.

"Not us," he ventured. "I guess, like, not *especially* us." But then a thought came to him. "Elizabeth, you don't think...?"

He had not thought this thought until now—he had been too busy with logistics—but now he began to think it. And he could tell everyone else in the car was thinking it, too.

"How would I know?" Liz cried, twisting her biggest ring around her smallest finger. "Maybe! First the financial centers, then the government folks, and then—"

"The very important people," Michael whispered.

"Wouldn't be at all surprised," Marlon said, turning solemn. "We're exactly the kinds of sons of bitches who'd make a nice trophy on some crazy motherfucker's wall."

He sounded scared, at last. And hearing Marlon scared made Michael as scared as he'd been all day. You never want to see your father scared, or your mother cry, and, as far as Michael's chosen family went, that's exactly what was happening right now, in this bad Japanese car that did not smell of new leather or new anything. It made him wish he'd tried harder to bring Liza along. On the other hand, maybe that would have been worse. It was almost as if his chosen family were as crushing to his emotional health as his real family! And that thought was really not one that he could allow himself to have on this day of all days—on any day.

"We're all under a lot of strain," Michael said. His voice was a little wobbly, but he didn't worry about crying; that didn't happen easily anymore,

AFRICAN GREY

Listening to the wind when you have gone is like having an African Grey to keep me ghostly company, who at night speaks from under a shroud in the kitchen corner in your voice.

One picks up constantly after the departed. They, too, require food and water. One's shoulder smarts from where they, habitually, stand.

I try to move carefully, now, as though to avoid your good-natured rebuke that something as simple as opening a bag could've been handled with a little more grace.

—Benjamin Landry

not since he'd tattooed around his tear ducts. "This is a very high-stress situation," he said. He tried to visualize himself as a responsible, humane father, taking his kids on a family road trip. "And we have to try and love each other."

"Thank you, Michael," Elizabeth said, and for a couple of miles all was peaceful. Then Marlon started in again on the ring.

"So these Krupps. They make the weapons that knock off your people, by the millions—and then you buy up their baubles? How does that work?"

Elizabeth twisted around in the front seat until she could look Marlon in the eye.

"What you don't understand is that when Richard put this ring on my finger it stopped meaning *death* and started meaning *love*."

"Oh, I see. You have the power to turn death into love, just like that."

Elizabeth smiled discreetly at Michael. She squeezed his hand, and he squeezed hers back. "Just like that," she whispered.

Marlon snorted. "Well, good luck to you. But back in the real world a thing is what it is, and thinking don't make it otherwise."

Elizabeth took a compact from a

hidden fold of her stole and reapplied some very red lipstick. "You know," she told him, "Andy once said it would be very glamorous to be reincarnated as my ring. That's an actual quotation."

"Sounds about right," Marlon said, spoiling the moment and sounding pretty sneery, which seemed, to Michael, more than a little unfair, for whatever you thought about Andy personally, as a person, surely if anybody had understood their mutual suffering, if anyone had predicted, prophet-like, the exact length and strength and connective angles and occasionally throttling power of their three-way love thread, it was Andy.

"'It is no gift I tender," Marlon read, very loudly. "'A loan is all I can; But do not scorn the lender; Man gets no more from Man."

"This is *not* the time for poetry!" Elizabeth shouted.

"This is *exactly* the time for poetry!" Marlon shouted.

Just then, Michael remembered that there were a few CDs in the glove box. If he believed in anything, he believed in the healing power of music. He reached over to open it and passed the cases to Elizabeth.

"I honestly don't think we should stop in Ohio," she said, examining them and then pushing a disk into the slit. "We could take turns driving. We'll drive through the night."

"I can't drive when I'm tired," Marlon said, hitching himself up into a semi-upright position. "Or hungry. Maybe I should do my shift now."

"And I'll do the night shift," Michael said, brightening, and he began looking for a place to stop. He could not get over how well he was handling the apocalypse so far. Sure, he was terrified, but, at the same time, oddly elated and—vitally—not especially medicated, for his assistant had all his stuff, and he hadn't told her he was escaping from New York until they were already on the road, fearing his assistant would try to stop him, as she usually tried to stop him doing the things he most wanted to do. Now he was beyond everyone's reach. He struggled to think of another moment in his life when he'd felt so free. Was that terrible to say? He had to confess to himself that he felt high, and now tried to identify the source. The adrenaline of self-survival? Mixed with the pity, mixed with the horror? He wondered: is this the feeling people have in war zones and the like? Oranother strange thought—was this in fact what civilian people generally feel every day of their lives, in their sad old rank-smelling Toyota Camrys, sitting in traffic on their way to their workplaces, or camping outside your hotel window, or fainting in front of your dancing image on the Jumbotron? This feeling of no escape from your situation—of forced acceptance? Of no escape even from your escape?

"Marlon, did you know that when Liz and I, when we have sleepovers . . . ?" Michael said, a little too quickly, and aware that he was babbling, but unable to stop. "Well, I really don't sleep at all! Not one wink. Unless you literally knock me out? I'm literally awake all night long. So I'm good to drive all the way to Brentwood. I mean, if we have to."

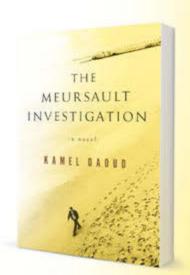
"Don't stop till you get enough," Marlon murmured, and lay back down.

"I dreamed a dream in time gone byyyyyy," Liz sang, along with the CD, "when hope was high and life worth liviiiiiing. I dreamed that love would never diiiiie! I prayed









"A tour-de-force reimagining of Camus's *The Stranger*, from the point of view of the mute Arab victims."

-THE NEW YORKER



that God would be for-giviiiing."

It was the sixth or seventh go-round. They were almost in Harrisburg, having been considerably slowed by two stops at Burger King, one at McDonald's, and three separate visits to KFC.

"If you play that song one more time," Marlon said, eating a bucket of wings, "I'm going to kill you myself."

The sun was setting on the deeporange polyvinyl-chloride blinds in their booth, and Michael felt strongly that his new role as the Decider must also include some aspect of spiritual guidance. To that end, he passed Marlon the maple syrup and said, in his high-pitched but newly determined tones, "You know, guys, we've driven six hours already and, well, we haven't talked at all about what happened back there."

They were sitting in an IHOP, just the other side of the Appalachian Mountains, with their mirrored shades on, eating pancakes. Michael had decided—two fast-food joints and eighty miles ago-to leave his usual disguise in the trunk of the car. It had become obvious that it wasn't necessary, no, not today. And now, with an overwhelming feeling of liberation, he removed his shades, too. For as it was in KFC, in Burger King, and beneath the Golden Arches, so it was in this IHOP: every soul in the place was watching television. Even the waitress who served them watched the television while she served, and spilled a little hot coffee on Michael's glove, and didn't say sorry and didn't clean it up, nor did she notice that Marlon wasn't wearing shoes—or that he was Marlon-or that resting beside the salt shaker was a diamond as big as the Ritz.

"I feel like one minute we were in the Garden, and it was a dream," Elizabeth said, slowly. "And we were happy, we were celebrating this marvellous boy"—she squeezed Michael's hand—"celebrating thirty years of your wonderful talent, my dear, and everything was just beautiful. And then—" She hugged her coffee mug with both hands and brought it to her lips. "And then, well, 'the tigers came'—and now it really feels like the end of days. I know that sounds silly, but that's how it feels to me. There's a childlike part of me

that just wants to *rewind* twenty-four hours."

"Make that twenty-four years," Marlon snapped, but with his classic wry Marlon smile, and all you could do was forgive him. "Scratch that," he said, hamming it up now. "Make it forty."

Elizabeth pursed her lips and made an adorable comic face. She looked like Amy, in "Little Women," doing some sly calculation in her head. "Come to think of it," she said, "forty would work out just swell for me, too."

"Not me," Michael said, letting a lot of air out of his mouth in a great rush so that he would be brave enough to say what he wanted to say, whether or not it was appropriate, whether or not it was the normal kind of thing you said in abnormal times like these. But perhaps this was his only real advantage, in this moment, over every other person in the IHOP and most of America: nothing normal had ever happened to him, not ever, not in his whole conscious life. And so there was a little part of him that was always prepared for the monstrous, familiar with it, and familiar, too, with its necessary counterbalancing force: love. He reached across the table and took the hands of his two dear friends in his own.

"I don't want to be in any other moment than this one," he told them. "Here. With you two. No matter how awful it gets. I want to be with you and with all these people. With everyone on earth. In this moment."

They were all silent for a second, and then Marlon raised his still gorgeous eyebrows, sighed, and said, "Hate to break it to you, buddy, but you don't have much choice about it either way. Looks like no one's gonna beam us up. Whatever this shit is"—he gestured toward the air in front of them, to the molecules within the air, to time itself—"we're stuck in it, just like everybody."

"Yes," Michael said. He was smiling, and it was the presence of a smile—unprecedented in that IHOP, on that day—that, more than anything else, finally attracted the waitress's attention. "Yes," he said. "I know." •

NEWYORKER.COM

Zadie Smith on "Escape from New York."

FICTION

LOVE IS BLIND AND DEAF

BY JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER



dam and Eve lived together happily for a few days. Being blind, Adam never had to see the oblong, splotchy birthmark across Eve's cheek, or her rotated incisor, or the gnawed remnants of her fingernails. And, being deaf, Eve never had to hear how weakly narcissistic Adam was, how selectively impervious to reason and unwonderfully childlike. It was good.

They are apples when they are and, after a while, they knew it all. Eve grasped the purpose of suffering (there is none), and Adam got his head around free will (a question of terminology). They understood why the new plants were green, and where breezes begin, and what happens when an irresistible force meets an immovable object. Adam saw spots; Eve heard pulses. He saw

shapes; she heard tones. And, at a certain point, with no awareness of the incremental process that had led them there, they were fully cured of their blindness and deafness. Cured, too, of their marital felicity.

What, each wondered, have I got myself into?

First they fought passively, then they despaired privately, then they used the new words ambiguously, then pointedly, then they conceived Cain, then they hurled the early creations, then they argued about who owned the pieces of what had never belonged to anybody. They hollered at each other from the opposite sides of the garden to which they'd retreated:

You're ugly!

You're stupid and wicked!

And then the first bruises spread

across the first knees, as the first humans whispered the first prayers: *Diminish me until I can bear it*.

But God refused them, or ignored them, or simply didn't exist enough.

Neither Adam nor Eve needed to be right. Nor did they need anything that could be seen or heard in the world. None of the paintings, none of the books, no film or dance or piece of music, not even green nature itself was capable of filling the sieve of aloneness. They needed peace.

Adam went looking for Eve one night, as the newly named animals had their first dreams. Eve saw him and approached.

"I'm here," she told him, because his eyes were covered with fig leaves.

He reached in front of him and said, "Here I am," though she didn't hear him, because her ears were stuffed with rolled-up fig leaves.

It worked until it didn't. There were only apples to eat, so Adam bound his hands with fig-leaf stems and Eve stuffed her mouth with fig leaves. It was good until it wasn't. He went to bed before he was tired, pulling a figleaf quilt up to his nostrils, which were plugged with torn fig leaves. She squinted through a veil of fig leaves into her fig-leaf phone, the only light in the room of the world, and listened to herself listening to him struggle to breathe. They were always inventing new ways not to be aware of the canyon between them.

And the unseeing and unhearing God in whose image they were created sighed, "They're so close."

"Close?" the angel asked.

"They're always inventing new ways not to be aware of the canyon between them, but it's a canyon of tiny distances: a sentence or a silence here, a closing or an opening of space there, a moment of difficult truth or of difficult generosity. That's all. They're always at the threshold."

"Of paradise?" the angel asked, watching the humans reach for each other yet again.

"Of peace," God said, turning the page of a book without edges. "They wouldn't be so restless if they weren't so close." •

THE COURSE OF HAPPINESS



s a Midwesterner, of course I first think of the good that I could do using time travel—vaccinating indigenous people against Old World diseases, sticking my foot out by a cliff on a Völkswanderung with young Hitler. I imagine tipping off the Archduke, or the Memphis police in 1968, or ... but it is just too much. My task, instead, will be to time-ricochet into the most enjoyable experiences I can imagine. Can I change gender? Going back in time as a woman presents so many issues—chattelization, corsets, hygiene. All right, I am a man, a charismatic one, and by God I'm loaded for bear. I am travelling into the North American wilderness with a case of single-malt Scotch and a youthful filly by my side. She tosses her head as I mount her and nickers softly as we lope on together in our magic bubble, first travelling alongside George Catlin to meet the arresting Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara people (but spreading no germs), then seeing every gorgeous mountain and tree that John Muir saw, only without the physical effort or the danger. At last we find the Chumash people, who direct us to a spot called humaliwo, the place of loud surf (sounds like: Malibu), and we arrive at a series of glorious beaches. I paddle out to a luxury ocean liner and steam over to Tahiti. There I turn back into a woman, the most beautiful Tahitian woman of them all, and spurn that ugly French painter crawling in the sand in favor of a calm lover who will tend me, feed me fresh fish in coconut milk, and not get me pregnant.

Now, by some act of grace, I am in a balcony seat in Gray's Inn circa 1594, watching one of the first performances of "The Comedy of Errors"—not because it is my favorite play but because I love to see the audience react to the Dromios. Travelling next in fiction, I'll be walking by the gate when Charles Bovary courts Emma, that lovely

portrait, the raindrops tapping on her parasol. But then, suddenly, I realize that I will have to knock that blue glass bottle of arsenic from her hand and save her, as I'd save all intensely memorable and sexually adventurous women in literature who end up violently slain by their author. Hold on, Anna! I've got a letter from Vronsky!

Perhaps I could forestall the need to sacrifice lustful female characters by swirling back to Ephesus around 57 A.D., just before Pentecost, finding Paul, and adding words to a letter to the Corinthians before it is sealed: If they do not have self-control, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion. But if thou must burn, burn merrily, my children! And plan thy offspring with the woman always to have full authority over her own body.

But there I go again, using my personal time travel to save even fictional people. So now I will stay upon the course of happiness. Chopin wants to play (which prelude?) for me again. I accept the invitation. Unaccountably, I am stranded for a few days in a comfortable jail cell with Walt Whitman and Henry James. I take one side of the room, share a bunk with Emily Dickinson. We listen in on their awkward conversations, exchange sharp glances of amusement. I appear at the Brontë vicarage with a basket containing bottles of fortified wine, rich cheeses, wholesome bread. Shoving the drunken brother, Branwell, into the cellar, I turn to Emily and ask her to tell me a ghost story. Wrenching forward to fabulous turning points in contemporary literature, I push Bankson on that fateful night. He kisses Nell. They ditch Fen. Then I'm in an uncanny state of fear with Maggie as red dust boils up around the battered white van containing Lord of Misrule. The horse appears, a pitiless demon, "calm, black, and poisonous." Not a pretty sight, but I want to see that horse. •



CyberKnife is the biggest advance in prostate cancer treatment in a decade. And only one place in Manhattan has it: NYCyberKnife.

CyberKnife" is as effective as surgery for prostate cancer. But there's no cutting, no pain, no incontinence and less risk of impotence. Treatment takes just one week — five brief appointments. And now the number one CyberKnife prostate cancer team in the country is here. Winthrop NYCyberKnife." To learn more about Manhattan's only CyberKnife program, call 1-866-WINTHROP, or go to winthrop.org/NYCyberKnife.



Manhattan's one and only CyberKnife Center.

150 Amsterdam (at 66th St.) • 1.866.WINTHROP • winthrop.org/NYCyberKnife

Your Health Means Everything.



A CRITIC AT LARGE

GO ASK ALICE

What really went on in Wonderland.

BY ANTHONY LANE



ho reads "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland"? The answer used to be: Anyone who can read. From the tangled tale of mass literacy one can pluck a few specific objectsbooks that were to be found in every household where there was somebody who could read and people who wanted to listen. Aside from the Bible, a typical list would run like this: "The Pilgrim's Progress,""Robinson Crusoe," and "Gulliver's Travels," to which were later added "The Pickwick Papers" and "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland." Notice that Alice is not the sole adventurer. Every one of those titles contains the leading character, whose fate is to go on a jour-

ney, and whose mettle is tested in the process. Each explores a different land-scape, or body of water, but all five traverse what you might call the valley of the shadow of life, profuse with incident. Three of the writers were men of God, and the two others began as journalists. Had you asked any of them to take a creative-writing course, the door would have closed in your face.

But who reads the Alice books nowadays? Everybody *knows* Alice, but that is not the same thing. There are countless ways to know something, or someone, without firsthand evidence, and Alice, as familiar as a household god and as remote as a child star, is a prime case of cultural osmosis. Having seeped through the membrane of the original books, she has spent the past century and a half infusing herself into the language, and the broader social discourse; as a result, we can all too easily picture her, quote her, or follow her example in the nonsense of our own lives without having read—or even feeling that we need to read—a word of Lewis Carroll.

Yet the need is more urgent than ever. Carroll wrote with a peppery briskness, impatient of folly, and always alive to the squalls of emotion that we struggle to curb:

"You know very well you're not real."

"I am real!" said Alice, and began to cry.
"You won't make yourself a bit realler by crying," Tweedledee remarked: "there's nothing to cry about."

"If I wasn't real," Alice said—half laughing through her tears, it all seemed so ridiculous—"I shouldn't be able to cry."

"I hope you don't suppose those are *real* tears?" Tweedledum interrupted in a tone of great contempt.

The second half of this exchange was used by Evelyn Waugh as the epigraph to "Vile Bodies," in 1930, and the tone is a perfect match for the chill, directionless frenzy of Waugh's personae. But Tweedledum's question is, if anything, more pertinent still to our epoch, when the capacity to weep, whether in triumph or disaster, is a heartfelt imposture that has proved de rigueur, not least in the realm of the reality show—a term, by the way, that would have caused Carroll to sharpen his pen like a carving knife. Conversations about what is real, what is possible, and how rubbery the rules that govern such distinctions turn out to be abound in the tales of Alice. Yet they are sold as children's books, and rightly so. A philosopher will ask how the identity of the self can be preserved amid the ceaseless flux of experience, but a child—especially a child who is growing so fast that she suddenly fills an entire room—will ask more urgently, as Alice does, "Was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different." Children, viewed from one angle, are philosophy in motion.

The latest entrant to the Carrollian maze is Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, who has written "The Story of Alice" (Belknap). As someone who teaches English at Magdalen College, Oxford, he is nicely

Legend has it that the book came out of a boat trip, but nothing is ever that simple.

positioned for the task—a stroll away from Christ Church, the college where the Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson taught mathematics, and the long-time residence of Lewis Carroll, who was almost, but not quite, the same person. The pair of them tussled, like Tweedledum and Tweedledee, and Carroll gave a peculiar definition of himself:

One who, having been unlucky enough to perpetrate two small books for children, has been bullied ever since by the herd of lion-hunters who seek to drag him out of the privacy he hoped an "anonym" would give him.

It is a miracle, in retrospect, that the small books should have earned such global fame. After all, they are not merely British, and not merely Victorian, but nineteenth-century Oxonian-as fastidious as Carroll himself, who complained to the college steward about the cooking of cauliflower at dinner and the hour at which his window cleaners had arrived. Other Oxford men, no less conservative in their tastes, and no less religiously observant, have sat in their rooms and conjured alternative lands, named Narnia and Middle-earth, but only Carroll dared to import into his creation the quizzical habits that he observed in his surroundings. Things in Oxford have a habit of being other than what they sound like. The House is not a house but another name for Christ Church; a Student, at the House, is not a student but a fellow; and going up and coming down, at Oxford and Cambridge, refer not to elevators but to arrivals and departures. To be sent down is the gravest penalty of all; what sin has Alice committed, one wonders, to be dispatched so abruptly down a rabbit hole?

It was outside Oxford, in July, 1862, that Dodgson went rowing, one afternoon, with a friend from Trinity College, Robinson Duckworth, and three young sisters—Lorina, Alice, and Edith Liddell, the daughters of the dean of Christ Church. Dodgson recorded the day in his journal:

Duckworth and I made an expedition *up* the river to Godstow with the three Liddells: we had tea on the bank there, and did not reach Ch. Ch. again till quarter past eight.

The following February, he appended a note to his entry:

On which occasion I told them the fairy-tale of "Alice's Adventures UnderGround,"

which I undertook to write out for Alice, and which is now finished (as to the text) though the pictures are not yet nearly done.

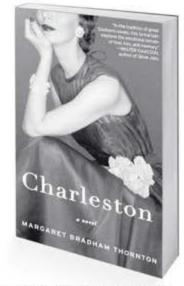
Legend has it that a book came out of a boat trip, but nothing is ever that simple. The mathematician, moonlighting as an alchemist, turned things both animate and inanimate into different substances. Dodgson became a dodo (a word that toys not just with extinction but with Dodgson's own tendency to stammer), while Duckworth, who later became chaplain to Queen Victoria, shrank into a duck; both creatures splash about not in a sun-warmed river but in a pool of a child's tears. Alice Liddell became "Alice," with no surname to tether her. "Alice's Adventures Underground" became what we call, for the sake of convenience, "Alice in Wonderland," although there is no such book. "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" was published in 1865; the hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary has been widely celebrated this year. In 1871 came "Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There"—another title that we often elide or get wrong. In that fable, our heroine walks into a wood where objects lose their names. She puts her hand on a tree, and can't summon the word for it. Even her own identity escapes her: "Then it really has happened, after all! And now, who am I?"

Douglas-Fairhurst is at home with transformation. His previous work, "Becoming Dickens" (2012), the best and the most fine-fingered of the many books published to coincide with the bicentenary of the novelist's birth, touched upon the genesis of "The Pickwick Papers," "Oliver Twist," and other early successes. If Dickens scholarship is a crowded field, however, Carroll studies should have a sign nailed firmly above the door: "Standing Room Only." This year has seen the publication of Edward Wakeling's "Lewis Carroll: The Man and his Circle" (I. B. Tauris) and the reissue of "Lewis Carroll: A Biography," by Morton N. Cohen. Supremos of logic and linguistics, photographers, historians of childhood, gender fiends, and chess wonks: all have tackled the puzzle of Alice and emerged, so they like to think, triumphant. Alexander Woollcott, in his preface to a compendium of Carroll, in 1939, declared, "Everything has

"THIS LYRICAL TALE

explores the emotional terrain of love, loss, and memory." —WALTER ISAACSON

NOW IN PAPERBACK



"WHAT THORNTON DELIVERS ...

has more in common with her Williams book-an obsessive and POETIC SCAFFOLDING OF DETAILS ... stitching them together into something larger while leaving the pieces to speak for themselves."

-The Paris Review

"THE REAL FEMME FATALE IS THE CITY ITSELF."

-New York Times Book Review

"THORNTON WRITES WITH CHARACTERISTIC ELEGANCE AND RESTRAINT."

-Wall Street Journal



"Eliza Poinsett is a fictional heroine, Southern at that. But she doesn't depend on the kindness of strangers. Eliza is the invention of MARGARET BRADHAM THORNTON

...the award-winning [editor] of Tennessee Williams' Notebooks." —Charlotte Observer



Also available as an e-book

befallen Alice, except the last thing—psychoanalysis. At least the new psychologists have not explored this dream book nor pawed over the gentle, shrinking celibate who wrote it." Woollcott spoke too late. "Psychoanalytic Remarks" on Alice and her creator had already appeared, in 1938, in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*. Since then, open season has prevailed:

As Alice exceeds the frame of reference, she has a direct experience of the unsymbolized trauma that the phallus attempts to displace in the erection of its privilege.

That comes from an essay, "The Phallic Gaze of Wonderland," by Richard Feldstein. Why do we feel so keenly the farce of this mismatch between Carroll and his commentators, in their infinite variety? Perhaps because the pair of books that started the palaver are such a slight affair—just over two hundred pages when pasted together. Alice, as if she sensed the onslaught of future inquirers, has a habit of putting plain, sane questions that tie her interlocutors in knots. Humpty Dumpty, asked whether he might not be safer on the ground, "pursed up his lips, and looked so solemn and grand that Alice could hardly help laughing." To laugh at solemnity and grandeur is part of our civic duty, as is our need to gauge those moments when the laughter has to stop.

he life of Lewis Carroll, as laid out L in one biography after the next, is not easily confused with the lives of the great Victorian explorers. The exploits of his heroine are so headlong, and so elastic in their range, that he could almost be rebuking himself for his own inclination to sit tight, like a dormouse. He was born in 1832, in the county of Cheshire, in northwest England. His father was a clergyman, but, then, whose wasn't? Jane Austen, Tennyson, and the Brontë sisters were all the product of rectories and parsonages. (The equivalent American list would be couched in song: Aretha Franklin, Sam Cooke, Nat King Cole, and, grimly, Marvin Gaye. For the Brontës, read the Pointer Sisters.)

After a wretched experience at boarding school, where Carroll's prevailing wish was to be, as he ominously said, "secure from annoyance at night," he arrived at Oxford, in 1851. As an undergraduate at Christ Church, his father's former college, he labored hard—thir-

teen hours a day, in the three weeks preceding one examination. Precocious in mathematics, he was soon awarded a fellowship, which, in the Oxford of that period, bore two restrictions: he was forbidden to marry, and he had to take holy orders within four years of completing his M.A. (master of arts) degree. Somehow, this never happened; he was ordained deacon shortly before Christmas, 1861, but, when faced with the next step—the priesthood—he "hesitated on the threshold." So says Douglas-Fairhurst, who adds wryly, "He would end up staying there for another thirty-seven years.'

It is odd, given the tireless inquest into Carroll, how seldom his religious faith has been brought up as evidence. This is, in part, because of his own timidity; eager he may have been to pursue a figure of speech to its unnatural conclusion, but, in theology, his intellectual nerve deserted him. Many storms blew through Anglicanism in his lifetime; the Oxford Movement, with its dedication to High Church ritual and the eventual conversion of its leading light, John Henry Newman, to Roman Catholicism, had struck on Carroll's own doorstep. Sides were taken, positions entrenched, and how did Carroll respond? "Somewhere, somehow, he sorted out the arguments for himself." Such is the placid conclusion reached by Morton N. Cohen. Darwinism, likewise, could not shake Carroll from his purpose. In common with many Anglicans, before and since, he clung to a sober middle way, betraying a nearheroic aversion to the unpleasant, the contentious, and the crude.

In practice, this lofted him into the highest ranks of priggery and fuss. There have always been bookish types who run on clockwork, and the noonday of the nineteenth century was their finest hour; regular churchgoing, no doubt, helped to wind them up. Carroll's existence, however, was regulated with a care that went beyond the bounds of piety. Beginning in his late twenties, he kept a register of "Letters Received and Sent," along with a précis of each letter. The final tally was 98,721. He was scarcely alone in his effusiveness (the letters of Thomas Carlyle and his wife, Jane, published by Duke University Press, have now reached Volume 42), but it



Take Your Work to Daughter Day

takes a very singular brain to mock its own productivity:

I hardly know which is me and which is the inkstand.... The confusion in one's mind doesn't so much matter-but when it comes to putting bread-and-butter, and orange marmalade, into the inkstand; and then dipping pens into oneself, and filling oneself up with ink, you know, it's horrid!

There are other surprising totals,

equally grand. Carroll took some three thousand photographs: no big deal to a backpacker with an iPhone, but an impressive haul for an epoch when using a camera was as time-consuming, and often as messy, as making a stew. He also compiled a list of those who came to dinner, including a diagram of where they sat and the dishes that were

served, so that no guest would be given the same meal twice. Two things set him apart from his fellow-precisians. First, what we construe as obsessive compulsion was, to his friends, a neverfailing fount of hospitality, and, for every Carroll scholar who regards the man as unhappily clenched and inward, there is another who will stress the sociable soul, quite at ease in a zealously sociable age. Second, there is this:

The table was a large one, but the three were all crowded together at one corner of it: "No room! No room!" they cried out when they saw Alice coming. "There's plenty of room!" said Alice indignantly, and she sat down in a large arm-chair at one end of the table.
"Have some wine," the March Hare said

in an encouraging tone.

Alice looked all round the table, but there was nothing on it but tea. "I don't see any wine," she remarked.

"There isn't any," said the March Hare.

Anybody can be a stickler, but to dispatch your imagination to a place where stickling is either banished or badly warped, along with seating plans, sufficient provisions, and basic decorum—that is as rare as a Jabberwock. Likewise, there can be few professional mathematicians who, in publishing a paper entitled "Dynamics of a Particle," slide toward the chaos of human emotion: "Obtuse Anger is that which is greater than Right Anger." This instinct recurs in the beautiful puns of the Mock Turtle, who informs Alice about the different branches of arithmetic ("Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and

Derision") and recalls, with a sigh, that his classics master used to teach him not Latin and Greek but "Laughing and Grief." Is there a purer Victorian joke? This urge to make fun of yourself, and of what you do for a living, is a traditional index of modesty, although the fun depends on how many selves you have, and Carroll, on the page, became pathologically skilled at framing in

> words, and in wordplay, everything that would make the Reverend Dodgson drop the cream jug. Go ahead and know thyself, but be warned: such knowledge means that battle has commenced.

There is, of course, one zone of Carroll's life that, to modern sensibilities, looks more bizarre than anything

in Wonderland, and where, for once, he was blind to his own excesses. This is the province of his "child-friends," as he called them—young females, whom he encountered and corralled at every turn, especially on vacations or train trips. He had a routine, described by Douglas-Fairhurst: "Carroll would strike up a conversation with a family, bring out the games and puzzles he kept in his little black travelling bag, and follow up their meeting by sending the child a signed copy of an Alice book." The chumminess would proceed from here, with each stage marked by a request:

If you should decide on sending over Gertrude and not coming yourself, would you kindly let me know what is the minimum amount of dress in which you are willing to have her taken?

The most remarkable aspect of this letter, written in 1876, is not that he was asking the mother of Gertrude Chataway whether he could photograph her daughter—preferably naked, in what he calls "Eve's original dress"but that Mrs. Chataway did not think the question remarkable. Four months later, Carroll repeated it, with a twist:

I have a little friend here, Lily Gray, child of Dr. Gray, and one of my chief beach friends at Sandown this year. She is 5, a graceful and pretty child, and one of the sweetest children I know (nearly as sweet as Gertrude)—and she is so perfectly simple and unconscious that it is a matter of entire indifference to her whether she is taken in



Presenting Sponsor:

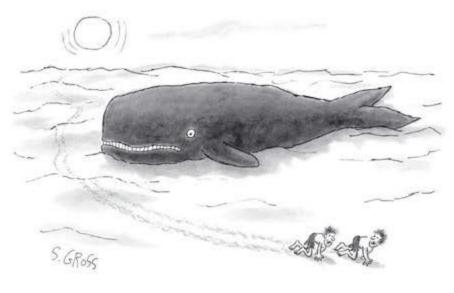
212-242-0800 Joyce.org

Major Support:

FORDFOUNDATION

The Pasculano Foundation

David Herro and Jay Franke



"And I thought we had problems."

full dress or nothing. My question is, are you going to allow Gertrude (who I think is also perfectly simple and unconscious) to be done in the same way?

It is impossible to read this now without horror. The politesse, the pointing up of sweetness, and the ascribing of "entire indifference" to the child evoke the classic stratagems of the pedophile, planning his campaign and convincing others (and, more important, himself) that he is doing no wrong—that there is no victim but merely a willing collaborator. After Carroll wrote his great poem "The Hunting of the Snark," in 1876, the daughter of the illustrator became another friend. Her name was Winifred Holiday, and she recalled, "When he stayed with us he used to steal on the sly into my room after supper, and tell me strange impromptu stories as I sat on his knee in my nightie."

Had Carroll lived today, and had such accounts been made public, he would have been either jailed or (a fate more infernal, for someone who treasured his privacy) hounded by an unforgiving press. The wish, we tell ourselves, is father of the deed; on the other hand, what was Carroll's wish? If buried, it lay very deep beneath his outer crust. As Douglas-Fairhurst calmly states, "It is far easier to condemn Carroll than it is to decide exactly what he should be accused of." There was no suggestion of physical abuse, and he himself thundered against

any hint of impropriety, deeming even an expurgated Shakespeare to be unfit for junior readers. (He planned his own edition, just for girls: "I have a dream of Bowdlerising Bowdler.") For us, the thunder is a giveaway, rumbling with guilt, but the fact remains that, in his time, Carroll both exemplified and enhanced what Douglas-Fairhurst calls "a more general trend towards seeing childhood as a separate realm." If it was inconceivable, in genteel circles, that Carroll could present a carnal threat, that was not because he was a clergyman, or the writer of cherished books, but because children could never be objects of desire. Far from being adults in bud, they were fenced off, in a garden of unknowing, and that is why parents were content to let Carroll, himself an innocent, wander in and browse. Freud's "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," including one on "Infantile Sexuality," were published in 1905. Carroll, mercifully, had died seven years earlier.

There were periods, it is true, when gossip rustled around Oxford, and the Liddells briefly suspended relations with Carroll; but the source of the gossip is hard to trace. Segments of his diary were later excised by his family. Cohen believes that he may have proposed marriage, or mock marriage, to Alice, who was then aged eleven, but that is hard to prove. One thing we do know about, because Carroll reports it in his diary, is

a rumor that he was using Alice and her sisters as a cover for wooing their governess, Miss Prickett, usually known as Pricks. The rumor tells you a great deal about the moral etiquette of the age: a warm affection for other people's offspring was acceptable; underhanded courtship of a chaperone was not. We cannot know what it was to inhabit such an era, when a middle-aged man could take a picture of three small sisters and give it the title "Open Your Mouth and Shut Your Eyes." Almost everything about Carroll now lies beyond the Freudian pale. All the more reason, then, to treasure the adventures of Alice on the page, which keep both their counsel and their cool— "strange impromptu stories," by any reckoning, yet undying. The life of Carroll somehow fades away, leaving nothing but his books, just as a cat, on the branch of a tree, can slowly vanish, bequeathing only a smile.

o return to those books, as Douglas-Fairhurst admits, "can feel like such a relief." His admirable method, in "The Story of Alice," is to test the soil from which they arose, and to ask how long the scent of them has lingered in the air. He shows that Carroll, in swiftly sending Alice downward, was alert to a thriving fascination with netherworldswhether in the London Underground, construction on which started in 1860, or, fifteen years earlier, in the English translation of a Norwegian novel, "which begins when the hero's rope gives way and he falls into an abyss, although he still has enough time to take a cake out of his pocket and eat it." Then, there was the aftermath: the Wonderland craze, which spawned feeble ripoffs and unsolicited sequels, as well as theatrical adaptations (which prompted Carroll to compose an overwrought essay on "'Alice' and the Stage") and enamelled biscuit tins, to which, surprisingly, he gave his blessing. The cookies within dismayed him, though, and he requested that any tins sent to his friends were "to go out empty." Three were delivered to "Mrs. and the Masters Hargreaves"—the grownup Alice Liddell and her sons.

Carroll kept in touch with her, while admitting that "it was not easy to link in one's mind the new face with the olden memory." After his death, Alice returned the compliment through her mere survival,



Feel better. Do more.

The stress and discomfort of being active and on your feet can destroy your quality of life. As you age, cartilage and other tissues that protect your joints become thinner and less resilient. Gravity Defyer® footwear helps protect your body and provide shock absorption from the ground up. Jogging running, walking - even routine standing. generate punishing impact. These forces produce lasting damage and wear on the body. Gravity Defyer footwear changes how our bodies

relate to the forces that prevent us from leading more active lives.

Returns Energy

The Ultimate Shock Absorbing Footwear

With each step our patented shoe technology returns energy to you, to help you stay active and on your feet longer. A more active you means your muscles build strength and endurance, your body receives more oxygen and nutrients, and the heart and lungs work more efficiently. As your body gets more efficient you will have more energy to live the life you've always dreamed of!

Super Walk \$129.95

WOMEN - Sizes 5-11 Medium & Wide Widths

- BLK/PURP TB9004FBP
- WHT/PINK TB9004FWSP



MEN - SIZES 7.5-15 Medium & Wide Widths

- BLACK TB9004MBS
- WHITE TB9004MWS



- Absorb harmful impact
- Stay comfortable & active
- Support & protect
- Stand & walk with greater ease

WIDTH

OUR ORDER

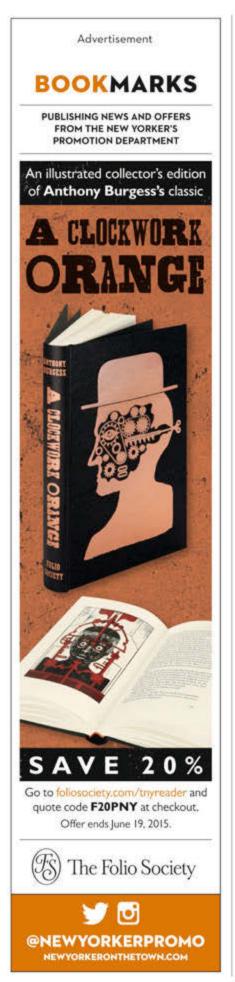
FREE SHIPPING Free Returns • Free Exchanges

COUPON CODE: NM1FGY6

Call 1 (800) 429-0039

GravityDefyer.com/NM1FGY6

Gravity Defyer Corp. 10643 Glenoaks Blvd Pacoima, CA 91331



which convinced readers that they were still in touch with him. The climax came in 1932, with a transatlantic trip, in the course of which two thousand guests filed into the gym at Columbia University to hear Mrs. Hargreaves speak. She also ingeniously claimed, in a radio broadcast, that "America and New York City are such exciting places they take me back to Wonderland." (There is a stirring film, "Dreamchild," from 1985, with a script by Dennis Potter, about her visit.) "That'll be a comfort, one way—never to be an old woman," Alice tells herself, near the start of her story, but the public was not in the least discomfited to learn that she had aged. The notion that this elderly dame and the seven-year-old of the books were one and the same person took root in received opinion, and there it has stuck: "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" is a roman à clef, we reassure ourselves, and the Liddell girl is the key.

So trustable is Douglas-Fairhurst as a key holder, and so heroic is his rummaging in the archives and toy boxes of Aliciana, that he leaves you wanting more. Carroll's parodies of Wordsworth and Tennyson in the Alice books, for instance, are calculated and quite cruel; is there not more to say about a man who seemed reluctant to approach the writings of major poets except in the spirit of lampoon? Later writers, by contrast, were open in their allegiance to Carroll; it is satisfying to be told that Vladimir Nabokov, hired to translate "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" into Russian, in 1922, was paid with an advance of "a single US five-dollar bill," and we should be grateful that Douglas-Fairhurst truffled around in "Finnegans Wake" to find some of Joyce's lovely Carrollings ("Wonderlawn's lost us for ever"), thus saving us the trouble. But why mention Carroll's shy appearance on the sleeve of "Sgt. Pepper" and not probe further into his effect on John Lennon, whose lyrics for "I Am the Walrus" and other songs steal so cockily from the books? How about Monty Python; or the unhinged British passion for cryptic crosswords, sure to wreck a morning's mental peace; or Mary Poppins, with her bottomless bag; or the demure girl who converses with monsters in Guillermo del Toro's "Pan's Labyrinth"; or the gray, motheaten hare devised by Jim Henson for "Dreamchild"; or the stop-motion "Alice,"

directed by Jan Švankmajer, the most Carroll-mad animator of all? As for the anapest, the waltzing metre in which Carroll delighted ("I engage with the Snark—every night after dark—/In a dreamy delirious fight"), it lay dormant for decades, and then burst out in the keen exclamations of Dr. Seuss: "You have brains in your head./ You have feet in your shoes."

To be honest, a book that hunted for Carroll in every crevice, in every art form, would never end. Oh, the places he goes! The look of Alice, for one thing, merits a book of its own, as she slowly morphs from the full-skirted, large-headed miss of John Tenniel's original drawings (on which nobody has improved) to Disney's simpering cartoon of 1951. This year, she acquired a neat black bob, in the return of Christopher Wheeldon's Alice ballet to the Royal Opera House, in London. The work, which premièred in 2011, radiates inventive brio; a flamingo's neck, for example, is re-created by the pink-sheathed, downstretched arm of a ballerina. Carroll himself would have gasped.

The dancers, you might argue, could not hope to capture the unerring pedantry of a man who wrought, and mainly inhabited, a world of words. What you were reminded of, however, as the Red Queen struck her fierce and angular attitudes, was the violence of that world. Life in Wonderland, and through the looking glass, is a savage affair, rife with shaken babies, threats of decapitation, and vorpal swords. What on earth compelled the mild mathematical bachelor to grow furiouser and furiouser as he beat the English language over the head? "I can't stand this any longer!" Alice cries, at the finale of her adventures, and sends the other characters, together with their plates and their pettifogging squabbles, crashing to the floor. "It is the High Table of Christ Church that we must think of here,"William Empson wrote, in a marvellous Carroll essay of 1935. High table is where Carroll and the other dons would dine. Did he really crave so revolutionary an act? If so, it stayed ticking inside him, like an unexploded bomb. Or perhaps it was defused, over time, by another reverie, in which he rowed down a river with children, on a golden afternoon. The river never ended, and the children never grew up. ♦

TIME TRAVEL BY DANIYAL MUEENUDDIN

LOST LUGGAGE



hen my father sailed from India to England in 1924, bound for Oxford University, he literally sailed—the ship had a boiler and a screw, but if the wind blew right the crew would also hoist up a sail to save on coal. Returning home in 1930, having succeeded in the exams for the Indian Civil Service, he snoozed as the boat eased into Bombay Roads, tired perhaps after a farewell party on board, the passengers in fancy dress—the strictures of class and color relaxed by the solvent of travel. Waking, he found his mother leaning over his bunk, her tears of joy falling on his face. He had returned gilded, empowered. The thousand men of the Empire's Indian Civil Service ruled over a population of three hundred million, and he would rule alongside them.

There he is, the profile like Valentino, nicknamed the Sheik by the girls he romanced in England—skin toast-colored, dressed in soft clothes, tweed suits, two dinner jackets kept in rotation. He stood among the vanguard of his race and class, Indian friends from Oxford or London, from Aitchison College in Lahore, who were systematically gaining control of the shining administrative machine that the British had so capably built, their youthful triumphant swagger tempered by humor. Heirs to that great fortune, they thought themselves poised to wash away the colonial stain and build a prosperous nation. Given a free spin in a time machine, I would like to have been with my father then, in undivided India, as he sat in a canal rest house adjoining some village in his district, drinking his single nightly peg of whiskey, tired from the day's work, order maintained or restored, justice done—in bed by nine, the heavy winter bedding fragrant with dust.

If I am nostalgic for my father's youth in the districts, however, it is as much for his lighthearted pastimes as for his administrative labors. In Pakistan today, rich and poor live under threat of violence, the sons of governors and generals are kidnapped and kept in holes underground, just as the sons of tenacre farmers are held. As a district officer, he roamed uninhabited wastes alone, indulging a passion for riding

cross-country. One year—this is one of the many stories he told me—posted along the Indus, he developed a sportsman's fascination with mugger crocodiles, which were to be found in great numbers basking along the banks of the river, and which were reputed to lure maidens into their scaly arms, and certainly did occasionally dine on a fisherman. The difficulty lay in the fact that the mugger would, if not immobilized by the first shot, flip itself into the water with its tail and disappear into a burrow nestled under the riverbank, never to be found. The first shot, therefore, must sever the spine at the base of the neck or the tail, paralyzing the animal. My father used a .220 Swift, a rifle with a small, fast bullet, thrown in a flat trajectory.

As he was busy in those days, hearing cases in his capacity as a magistrate, he fashioned an arrangement to mix business and pleasure. The pleaders, plaintiffs, and defendants would be instructed to meet him at a certain place along the banks of the Indus. There a large flat-bottomed barge, ordinarily used for carrying buffalo, camels, and the occasional wedding party across the river, would have been requisitioned for the day. The court, twenty or thirty strong, would embark, my father sitting on the foredeck at a desk. The barge would cast off and float down the river, guided by men with poles.

My father would knit his brow in concentration as the pleaders began. Suddenly, Mughla, my father's notoriously unceremonious hunting guide, would roar from his lookout at the bow, "Gator time, boys!"—or, rather, "Pai chamak di hai!" The pleaders faltered, the injured and injuring parties sat down on the gunwale, crossed their legs, smoked cigarettes, chatted about village affairs. My father leapt off the boat as it touched shore, gun in hand, and made a long detour around the sandbar where the mugger lay, balancing its extreme wiliness against its cold-blooded craving for a hot sunbath. Soon, the boat-bound crew would be treated to the sight of their reverend judge's burn wiggling above the bushes as he crawled into his emplacement. Kawhong! boomed the .220 Swift, its report echoing over the water, and, if his aim was true, Mughla would rush forward, splashing and paddling as he went, to lay hands on the twitching beast.

Now the rivers are polluted and dying, the government forests cut down, groundwater failing. Pervasive corruption has battered all the instruments of governance into hideous shapes. I remember my father, gone these twenty-five years, thoughtful as he concluded this story of Mughla and the crocodiles. He waved his hand vaguely toward the back of the house, where the go-downs contained all sorts of odd lumber, steamer trunks, bric-a-brac from houses sold long ago, his mothballed fancy-dress costume. "I had a complete set of crocodile luggage made from those skins," he recalled, offering me a generous slice of almond cake from the tea tray. "If it hasn't been lost, it must be lying there somewhere. But probably someone has carried it away." \| \|



y father kept him in a stall, because he didn't know where else to keep him. He had been given to my father by a friend, a sea captain, who said that he had bought him in Salonika; however, I learned from him directly that he was born in Colophon.

I had been strictly forbidden to go anywhere near him, because, I was told, he was easily angered and would kick. But from my personal experience I can confirm that this was an old superstition, and from the time I was an adolescent I never paid much attention to the prohibition and in fact spent many memorable hours with him, especially in winter, and wonderful times in summer, too, when Trachi (that was his name) with his own hands put me on

his back and took off at a mad gallop toward the woods on the hills.

He had learned our language fairly easily, but retained a slight Levantine accent. Despite his two hundred and sixty years, his appearance was youthful, in both his human and his equine aspects. What I will relate here is the fruit of our long conversations.

The centaurs' origins are legendary, but the legends that they pass down among themselves are very different from the classical tales we know.

Remarkably, their traditions also refer to a Noah-like inventor and savior, a highly intelligent man they call Cutnofeset. But there were no centaurs on Cutnofeset's ark. Nor, by the way, were there "seven pairs of every species of clean beast, and a pair of every species of the beasts that are not clean." The centaurian tradition is more rational than the Biblical, holding that only the archetypal animals, the key species, were saved: man but not the monkey; the horse but not the donkey or the wild ass; the rooster and the crow but not the vulture or the hoopoe or the gyrfalcon.

How, then, did these species come about? Immediately afterward, the legend says. When the waters retreated, a deep layer of warm mud covered the earth. Now, this mud, which harbored in its decay all the enzymes from what had perished in the flood, was extraordinarily fertile: as soon as it was touched by the sun, it was covered with shoots from which grasses and plants of every type sprang forth; and, further, its soft, moist bosom was host to the marriages of all the species saved in the ark. It was a time, never to be repeated, of wild, ecstatic fecundity, in which the entire universe felt love, so intensely that it nearly returned to chaos.

Those were the days when the earth itself fornicated with the sky, when everything germinated and everything was fruitful. Not only every marriage but every union, every contact, every encounter, even fleeting, even between different species, even between beasts and stones, even between plants and stones, was fertile, and produced offspring not in a few months but in a few days. The sea of warm mud, which concealed the earth's cold, prudish face, was one boundless nuptial bed, all its recesses boiling over with desire and teeming with jubilant germs.

This second creation was the true creation, because, according to what is passed down among the centaurs, there is no other way to explain certain similarities, certain convergences observed by all. Why is the dolphin similar to the fish, and yet gives birth and nurses its offspring? Because it's the child of a tuna and a cow. Where do butterflies get their delicate colors and their ability to fly? They are the children of a flower and a fly. Tortoises are the children of a frog and a rock. Bats of an owl and a mouse. Conchs of a snail and a polished pebble. Hippopotami of a horse and a river. Vultures of a worm and an owl. And the big whales, the leviathans—how to explain their immense mass? Their wooden

bones, their black and oily skin, and their fiery breath are living testimony to a venerable union in which—even when the end of all flesh had been decreedthat same primordial mud got greedy hold of the ark's feminine keel, made of gopher wood and covered inside and out with shiny pitch.

Such was the origin of every form, whether living today or extinct: dragons and chameleons, chimeras and harpies, crocodiles and minotaurs, elephants and giants, whose petrified bones are still found today, to our amazement, in the heart of the mountains. And so it was for the centaurs themselves, since in this festival of origins, in this panspermia, the few survivors of the human family also participated.

Notably, Cam, the profligate son, participated: the first generation of centaurs originated in his wild passion for a Thessalian horse. From the beginning, these progeny were noble and strong, preserving the best of both equine and human nature. They were at once wise and courageous, generous and shrewd, good at hunting and at singing, at waging war and at observing the heavens. It seemed, in fact, as happens with the most felicitous unions, that the virtues of the parents were magnified in their offspring, since, at least in the beginning, they were more powerful and faster racers than their Thessalian mothers, and a good deal wiser and more cunning than black Cam and their other human fathers. This would also explain, according to some, their longevity, though others have attributed it to their eating habits, which I will come to in a moment. Or their longevity could simply be a projection across time of their great vitality, and this I, too, believe resolutely (and the story I am about to tell attests to it): that in hereditary terms the herbivore power of the horse counts less than the red blindness of the bloody and forbidden spasm, the moment of human-feral fullness in which the centaurs were conceived.

Whatever we may think of this, anyone who has carefully considered the centaurs' classical traditions cannot help noticing that centauresses are never mentioned. As I learned from Trachi, they do not in fact exist.

The man-mare union, very seldom

fertile today, produces and has produced only male centaurs, for which there must be a fundamental reason, though at present it eludes us. As for the inverse, the union between stallions and women, this has scarcely ever occurred, and comes about through the solicitation of dissolute women, who by nature are not particularly inclined to procreate.

In the exceptional cases in which fertilization is successful in these rare unions, a dualistic female offspring is produced, her two natures, however, inversely assembled. The creatures have the head, neck, and front feet of a horse, but their back and belly are those of a human female, and the hind legs are human.

During his long life Trachi had encountered very few of them, and he assured me that he felt no attraction to these squalid monsters. They were not "proud and nimble" but insufficiently vital; they were infertile, idle, and transient; they did not become familiar with man or learn to obey his commands but lived miserably in the densest forests, not in herds but in rural solitude. They fed on grass and berries, and when they were surprised by a man they had the curious habit of always presenting themselves to him head first, as if embarrassed by their human half.

₹rachi was born in Colophon of a one of the numerous Thessalian horses that are still wild on the island. I am afraid that among the readers of these notes are some who may refuse to believe these assertions, since official science, permeated as it still is today with Aristotelianism, denies the possibility of a fertile union between different species. But official science often lacks humility: such unions are, indeed, generally infertile, but how often has evidence been sought? No more than a few dozen times. And has it been sought among all the innumerable possible couplings? Certainly not. Since I have no reason to doubt what Trachi has told me about himself, I must therefore encourage the incredulous to consider that there are more things in heaven and on earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy.

He lived mostly in solitude, left to himself, which was the common destiny of those like him. He slept in the open,

"If you don't keep yourself awake with those fascinations, you will never be a filmmaker."

Werner Herzog



Hellenic Programs at The New York Public Library



In conversation with Paul Holdengräber

Legendary filmmaker Werner Herzog will join Paul Holdengräber for a conversation about Linear B, Greek drama, Homer, and Thucydides.

> Tuesday, June 16, at 7 pm The New York Public Library

Stephen A. Schwarzman Building 42nd Street between 5th and 6th Avenues





For more information, visit nypl.org/live or onassisusa.org.





standing on all four hooves, with his head on his arms, which he would lean against a low branch or a rock. He grazed in the island's fields and glades, or gathered fruit from branches; on the hottest days he would go down to one of the deserted beaches, and there he would bathe, swimming like a horse, chest and head erect, and then he would gallop for a long while, violently churning up the wet sand.

But the bulk of his time, in every season, was devoted to food: in fact, during the forays that Trachi in the vigor of his youth frequently undertook among the barren cliffs and gorges of his native island, he always, following an instinct for prudence, brought along, tucked under his arms, two big bundles of grass or foliage, gathered in times of rest.

Although centaurs are limited to a strictly vegetarian diet by their predominantly equine constitution, it must be remembered that they have a torso and a head like a man's, which obliges them to introduce through a small human mouth the considerable quantity of grass, straw, or grain necessary to sustain their large bodies. These foods, notably of limited nutritional value, also require long mastication, since human teeth are not well adapted to the grinding of forage.

In conclusion, the nourishment of centaurs is a laborious process; by phys-

ical necessity, they are required to spend three-quarters of their time chewing. This fact is not lacking in authoritative testimonials, first and foremost that of Ucalegon of Samos (*Dig. Phil.*, XXIV, II–8 and XLIII *passim*), who attributes the centaurs' proverbial wisdom to their alimentary regimen, which consists of one continuous meal from dawn to dusk: this deters them from other vain or baleful activities, such as gossip or the pursuit of riches, and contributes to their usual self-restraint. Bede also mentions this in his "Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum."

It is rather strange that the classical mythological tradition neglects this characteristic of centaurs. The truth of it rests on reliable evidence, and, as we have shown, it can be deduced by a simple consideration of natural philosophy.

To return to Trachi: his education was, by our criteria, fragmentary. He learned Greek from the island's shepherds, whose company he occasionally sought out, despite his shy and taciturn nature. From his own observations, he learned many subtle and intimate things about grasses, plants, forest animals, water, clouds, stars, and planets; I myself noticed that, even after his capture, and under a foreign sky, he could feel the approach of a gale or the imminence of a snowstorm many hours

before it actually arrived. Though I couldn't say how, nor could he himself, he also felt the grain growing in the fields, he felt the pulse of water in underground streams, and he sensed the erosion of flooded rivers. When De Simone's cow gave birth two hundred metres away from us, he felt a reflex in his own gut; the same thing happened when the tenant farmer's daughter gave birth. In fact, on a spring evening he informed me that a birth was taking place and, more precisely, in a particular corner of the hayloft; we went there and found that a bat had just brought into the world six blind little monsters, and was feeding them minuscule portions of her milk.

All centaurs are made this way, he told me, feeling every germination, animal, human, or vegetable, as a wave of joy running through their veins. They also perceive, in the precordial region, and in the form of anxiety and tremulous tension, every desire and every sexual encounter that occurs in their vicinity; therefore, even though they are usually chaste, they enter into a state of vivid agitation during the season of love.

We lived together for a long time: in some ways, I can say that we grew up together. Despite his advanced age, he was actually a young creature in everything he said and did, and he learned things so easily that it seemed pointless (not to mention awkward) to send him to school. I educated him myself, almost inadvertently, passing on to him the knowledge that I learned from my teachers.

We kept him hidden as much as possible, partly because of his own explicit wish, partly because of a form of exclusive and jealous affection that we all felt for him, and partly because a combination of rationality and intuition advised us to shield him from unnecessary contact with our human world.

Naturally, word of his presence in our barn leaked out among the neighbors. At first, they asked a lot of questions, some rather intrusive, but then, as will happen, their curiosity diminished from lack of nourishment. A few of our intimate friends were allowed to see him, the first of whom were the De Simones, and they swiftly became his friends, too. Only once, when a



"I've got you on the waiting list, but I think it's for a Birkin bag."

horsefly bite provoked a painful abscess in his rump, did we require the skill of a veterinarian, but he was an understanding and discreet man, who most scrupulously promised to keep this professional secret and, as far as I know, kept his promise.

Things went differently with the blacksmith. Nowadays, blacksmiths are unfortunately rather scarce: we found

one two hours away by foot, and he was a yokel, stupid and brutish. My father tried in vain to persuade him to maintain a certain reserve, in part by paying him tenfold for his services. It made no difference; every Sunday at the tavern he gathered a crowd around him and told the entire village about his strange client. Luckily, he liked his wine and was

in the habit of telling tall tales when he was drunk, so he wasn't taken too seriously.

I find it painful to write this story. It is a story from my youth, and I feel that in writing it I am expelling it from myself, and that later I will feel bereft of something strong and pure.

One summer Teresa De Simone, my childhood friend and cohort, returned to her parents' house. She had gone to the city to study, and I hadn't seen her for many years; I found her changed, and the change troubled me. Maybe I had fallen in love, but with little consciousness of it: what I mean is, I did not admit it to myself, not even hypothetically. She was quite lovely, shy, calm, and serene.

As I've already mentioned, the De Simones were among the few neighbors whom we saw with some regularity. They knew Trachi and loved him.

After Teresa's return, we spent a long evening together, just the three of us. It was one of those unique, never-to-be-forgotten evenings: the moon, the crickets, the intense smell of hay, the air still and warm. We heard singing in the distance, and suddenly Trachi began to sing, without looking at us, as if in a dream. It was a long song, its rhythm bold and strong, with words I didn't understand. A Greek song, Trachi said; but when we asked him to translate it he turned his head away and fell silent.

We were all silent for a long time; then Teresa went home. The following morning, Trachi drew me aside and said this: "Oh, my dearest friend, my hour has come. I have fallen in love. That woman has got inside of me, and possesses me. I desire to see her and hear her, perhaps even touch her, and nothing else; I therefore desire something impossible. I am reduced to one

point: there is nothing left of me except this desire. I am changing, I have changed, I have become another."

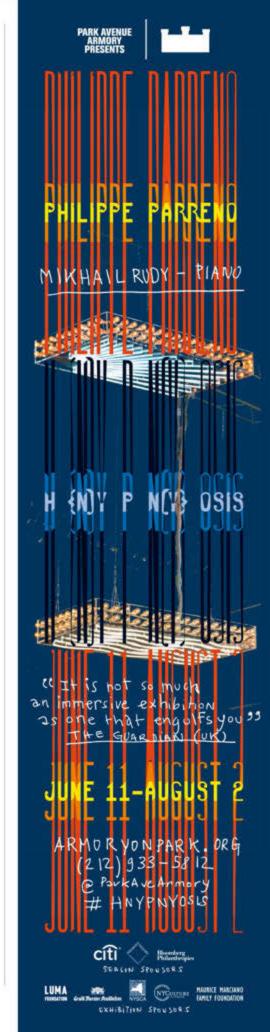
He told me other things as well, which I hesitate to write, because it's unlikely that my words will do him justice. He told me that, since the previous night, he had become "a battlefield"; that he understood, as he never had before, the ex-

ploits of his violent ancestors, Nessus, Pholus; that his entire human half was crammed with dreams, with noble, courtly, and vain fantasies; that he wanted to accomplish reckless feats and fight for justice with the strength of his own arms, raze to the ground the densest forests with his vehemence, run to the ends of the earth, discover and conquer new lands, and create there the works of a fertile civilization. All of this, in a way that was obscure even to himself, he wanted to perform before the eyes of Teresa De Simone: to do it for her, to dedicate it to her. Finally, he told me, he realized the vanity of his dreams in the very act of dreaming them, and this was the content of the song of the previous evening, a song that he had learned long ago, during his adolescence in Colophon, and which he had never understood and never sung until now.

For many weeks, nothing else happened; we saw the De Simones every so often, but Trachi's behavior revealed nothing of the storm that raged inside him. It was I, and no one else, who provoked the breakdown.

One October evening, Trachi was at the blacksmith's. I met Teresa, and we went for a walk together in the woods. We talked, and of whom but Trachi? I didn't betray my friend's confidence, but I did worse.

I quickly understood that Teresa was not as shy as she initially appeared to be: she chose, as if by chance, a narrow path



that led into the thickest part of the woods; I knew it was a dead end, and knew that Teresa knew. Where the path came to an end, she sat down on dry leaves and I did the same. The valley bell tower rang out seven times, and she pressed up against me in a way that rid me of all doubt. By the time we got home, night had fallen, but Trachi hadn't yet returned.

I immediately realized that I had behaved badly; in fact, I realized it during the act itself, and still today it pains me. Yet I also know that the fault was not all mine, nor was it Teresa's. Trachi was with us: we had immersed ourselves in his aura, we had gravitated into his field. I know this because I myself had seen that wherever he passed flowers bloomed before their time, and their pollen flew in his wake as he ran.

Trachi didn't return. Over the following days, we laboriously reconstructed the rest of his story based upon witnesses' accounts and his tracks.

After a night of anxious waiting for all of us, and of secret torment for me, I went to look for him myself at the blacksmith's. The blacksmith wasn't at home: he was in the hospital with a cracked skull, and unable to speak. I found his assistant. He told me that Trachi had come at about six o'clock to get shoed. He was silent and sad, but tranquil. Without showing any impatience, he let himself be chained as usual (the uncivilized practice of this particular blacksmith, who, years earlier, had had a bad experience with a skittish horse; we had tried, in vain, to convince him that this precaution was in every way absurd with regard to Trachi). Three of his hooves had already been shoed when a long and violent shudder coursed through him. The blacksmith turned on him with that harsh tone often used on horses; as Trachi's agitation seemed to increase, the blacksmith struck him with a whip.

Trachi appeared to calm down, "but his eyes were rolling around as if he were mad, and he seemed to be hearing voices." Suddenly, with a furious tug, he pulled the chains from their wall mounts, and the end of one hit the blacksmith in the head, sending him to the floor in a faint. Trachi then threw himself against the door with all his might, head first, arms crossed over his head, and galloped off toward the hills while the four chains,

still constricting his legs, whirled around, wounding him repeatedly.

"What time did that happen?" I asked, with a disturbing presentiment.

The assistant hesitated: it was not yet night, but he couldn't say precisely. Well, yes, now he remembered: just a few seconds before Trachi pulled the chains from the wall, the time had rung from the bell tower, and the boss had said to him, in dialect so that Trachi wouldn't understand, "It's already seven o'clock! If all my clients were as *currish* as this one ..."

Seven o'clock!

It wasn't difficult, unfortunately, to follow Trachi's furious flight; even if no one had seen him, there were conspicuous traces of the blood he had lost, of the scrapes the chains had inflicted on tree trunks and rocks by the side of the road. He hadn't headed toward home, or toward the De Simones': he had cleared the two-metre wooden fence that surrounded the Chiapasso property, and crossed straight through the vineyards in a blind fury, knocking down stakes and vines, breaking the thick iron wires that supported the vine shoots.

He reached the barnyard and found the barn door bolted shut from the outside. He could have opened it easily with his hands; instead, he picked up an old thresher, weighing well over fifty kilos, and hurled it at the door, reducing it to splinters. Only six cows, a calf, some chickens and rabbits were in the barn. Trachi left immediately and, still at a mad gallop, headed toward Baron Caglieris's estate.

It was at least six and a half kilometres away, on the other side of the valley, but Trachi got there in a matter of minutes. He looked for the stable: he found it not with his first blow but only after he had used his hooves and shoulders to knock down several doors. What he did in the stable we know from an eyewitness, a stableboy, who, at the sound of the door shattering, had had the good sense to hide in the hay and from there had seen everything.

Trachi hesitated for a moment on the threshold, panting and bloody. The horses, unsettled, tossed their heads, tugging on their halters. Trachi pounced on a three-year-old white mare; in one stroke he severed the chain that bound her to the trough, and dragging her by that chain led her outside. The mare didn't put up any resistance, which was strange, the stableboy told me, since she had a rather skittish and reluctant character, and was not in heat.

They galloped together as far as the river: here Trachi was seen to stop, cup his hands, dip them into the water, and drink repeatedly. They then proceeded side by side into the woods. Yes, I followed their tracks: into those same woods, along that same path, to that same place where Teresa had asked me to take her.

And it was right there, for that entire night, that Trachi must have celebrated his monstrous nuptials. I found the ground dug up, broken branches, brown and white horsehair, human hair, and more blood. Not far away, drawn by the sound of her troubled breathing, I found the mare. She lay on her side on the ground, gasping, her noble coat covered with dirt and grass. Hearing my footsteps she lifted her head a little, and followed me with the terrible stare of a spooked horse. She was not wounded but worn out. She gave birth eight months later to a foal: in every way normal, I was told.

Here Trachi's direct traces vanish. But, as some may perhaps remember, over the following days the newspapers reported a strange series of horse-rustlings, all perpetrated with the same technique: a door knocked down, the halter undone or ripped off, the animal (always a mare, and always alone) led into a nearby wood, to be discovered there exhausted. Only once did the abductor seem to meet any resistance: his chance companion of that night was found dying, her neck broken.

There were six of these episodes, and they were reported in various places on the peninsula, occurring one after the other from north to south-in Voghera, in Lucca, near Lake Bracciano, in Sulmona, in Cerignola. The last happened near Lecce. Then nothing else. But perhaps this story is linked to a strange report made to the press by a fishing crew from Puglia: just off Corfu, they had come upon "a man riding a dolphin." This odd apparition swam vigorously toward the east; the sailors shouted at it, at which point the man and the gray rump sank under the water, disappearing from view. •

> (Translated, from the Italian, by Jenny McPhee.)

MORLOCKS AND ELOI



ome months ago, I briefly became pregnant with the child of a Ph.D. in quantum physics, and for a few seconds I understood the nature of time: It was a small sphere, a compressed rubber band. The band was one long path, but its folds and loops touched each other in myriad places. A mite travelling along the band would experience it as linear, but by hopping one millifraction of a millimetre it could cross to a section metres from its starting point. The sphere was tennis-ball-size, and yet I understood that it was infinite.

The physicist and I are opposites. He works with numbers, I with letters. He pays half his income in taxes; I pay nil. He donates a big chunk of his earnings to charity; I give nothing. My cholesterol is high; his is excellent.

But we both love H. G. Wells's "The Time Machine." The scenario is this: The Time Traveller, a scientist and inventor in nineteenth-century London, builds a time machine and leaps forward eight hundred thousand years. He finds the Eloi, large-eyed, elflike beings who wear fey garments, eat only fruit, and sleep in crumbling stone halls built by some previous civilization. They sleep on piles of silk throw pillows and make playful love on grassy knolls.

I recently drank Sauternes for the first time, a Château d'Yquem that the physicist said was "very good." I was immediately reminded of the Eloi, because in my memory they drank an exotic flower nectar, which I imagined tasting exactly like this—each drop a galaxy.

The Time Traveller first believes that the Eloi are the only people who remain on Earth: that we've evolved to a simple communal life. It's only through the white "ghosts" he glimpses, the Eloi's fear of "dark nights," and, eventually, his excursion into a well to recover the time machine that he discovers the existence of the Morlocks—canny, subterranean carnivores, the descendants, he thinks, of Britain's working class. Owing to vestigial impulse, the Morlocks still feed and clothe the Eloi, their once masters—thus the

silk garments, the tables heaped with fruit—but they also harvest and eat them.

This is horrible! the Time Traveller thinks. He rescues an Eloi named Weena, who is drowning in a river—the other Eloi are too lazy, weak, and apathetic to help—and she becomes his familiar, clinging to him as he explores the decaying city.

It is easy to time-travel, the physicist says—we do it every day. Travelling backward is the problem. If a man goes backward, it is likely that he'll do something that would prevent his birth, such as kill his father. Time travel backward is impossible unless, the physicist says, you dispense with causality, the belief that one thing can cause another, and embrace a world in which—as in Borges's garden—there are many forking paths, and anything that can happen does. But if you do that, the physicist says, life becomes random and meaningless.

At his journey's height, the Time Traveller discovers—in the Palace of Green Porcelain, which he's trekked through a dark wood to reach—matches and camphor that are supposed to keep the Morlocks at bay. It doesn't work, of course: the Morlocks attack, the Traveller accidentally starts a forest fire, and Weena is abducted (and, presumably, eaten). He makes it home with only some wilted white flowers that she gave him to remember her by. The Time Traveller brings doom to all he's intimate with in forward epochs; he infects them with the past.

The Eloi adorn themselves with flowers, dance, and sing in the sunlight—utopia, Wells suggests, except for the Morlocks. But I wonder if we can blame them for eating the Eloi; there's not much other meat around, because horses, cows, pigs, and sheep have all gone extinct, and the cooked haunches that the Traveller sees in the Morlocks' underworld have a pleasantly heavy smell. Indeed, when he returns from his journey his dinner companions are shocked by how ravenously he falls upon his meat.

Which would you be? the physicist asks me. Eloi or Morlock?

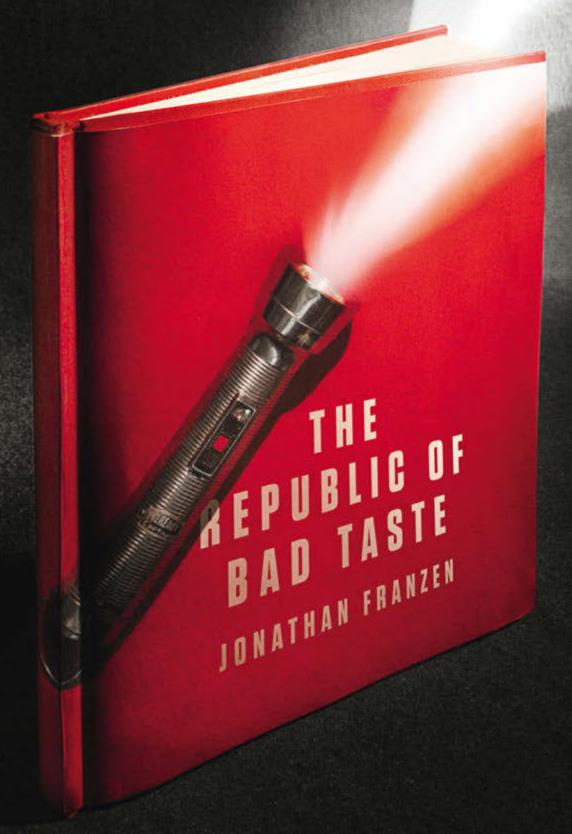
I am blood type O—the crudest and, according to some, the oldest—and when I eat grains I bloat, become stupid, and fall asleep. I can't imagine being a "frugarian," like the Eloi.

He says, Morlock.

Is it possible to sympathize with the brutal, strong, wily descendants of the lower class—and with their prey? Like many, I envision a future where no one's hungry, and labor's fairly paid. So does the physicist. He adds, there's just one tax: consumption. Consume more, pay more.

I drank a Sauternes last week at an old restaurant downtown—just one glass, for dessert. "Not very good," the physicist said. Because I remembered the taste of the Château d'Yquem, it was barely good at all. •





he church on Siegfeldstrasse was open to anyone who embarrassed the Republic, and Andreas Wolf was so much of an embarrassment that he actually resided there, in the basement of the rectory, but unlike the others—the true Christian believers, the friends of the Earth, the misfits who defended human rights or didn't want to fight in World War III—he was no less an embarrassment to himself.

For Andreas, the most achievedly totalitarian thing about the Republic was its ridiculousness. It was true that people who tried to cross the death strip were unridiculously shot, but to him this was more like an oddity of geometry, a discontinuity between Eastern flatness and Western three-dimensionality that you had to assume to make the math work. As long as you avoided the border, the worst that could happen was that you'd be spied on and picked up and interrogated, do prison time and have your life wrecked. However inconvenient this might be for the individual, it was leavened by the silliness of the larger apparatus—the risible language of "class enemy" and "counter-revolutionary elements," the absurd devotion to evidentiary protocol. The authorities would never just dictate your confession or denunciation and force or forge your signature. There had to be photos and recordings, scrupulously referenced dossiers, invocations of democratically enacted laws. The Republic was heartbreakingly German in its striving to be logically consistent and do things right. It was like the most earnest of little boys, trying to impress and outdo its Soviet father. It was even loath to falsify election returns. And mostly out of fear, but maybe also out of pity for that little boy, who believed in socialism the way children in the West believed in a flying Christkind who lit the candles on the Christmas tree and left presents underneath it, the people all went to the polls and voted for the Party. Even the dissidents spoke the language of reform, not overthrow. Everyday life was merely constrained, not tragically terrible. (Olympic bronze was the Berliner Zeitung's idea of calamity.) And so Andreas, whose embarrassment it was to be the megalomaniacal antithesis of a dictatorship too ridiculous to be worthy of megalomania, kept his distance from the other

misfits hiding behind the church's skirts. They disappointed him aesthetically, they offended his sense of specialness, and they wouldn't have trusted him anyway. He performed his Siegfeldstrasse ironies privately.

Alongside the broad irony of being an atheist dependent on a church was the finer irony of earning his keep as a counsellor of at-risk youth. Had any East German child ever been less at risk than he? Yet here he was, in the basement of the rectory, in group sessions and private meetings, counselling teenagers on how to overcome promiscuity and alcohol dependency and domestic dysfunction and assume more productive positions in a society he despised. And he was good at what he did—good at getting kids back into school, finding them jobs in the gray economy, connecting them with trustworthy government caseworkers—and so he was himself, ironically, a productive member of that society.

His own fall from grace served as his credential with the kids. Their problem was that they took things too seriously (self-destructive behavior was itself a form of self-importance), and his message to them was always, in effect, "Look at me. My father's on the Central Committee and I'm living in a church basement, but do you ever see me serious?" The message was effective, but it shouldn't have been, because, in truth, he was scarcely less privileged for living in a church basement. He'd severed all contact with his parents as a twentyone-year-old, in 1981, but in return for this favor they protected him. He hadn't even been arrested for the "subversive" prank he'd played on the Republic's leading literary magazine, the way any of his at-risk charges would have been. But they couldn't help liking him and responding to him, because he spoke the truth, and they were hungry to hear it. The girls practically lined up outside his office door to drop their pants for him, and this, too, of course, was ironic. He rendered a valuable service to the state, coaxing antisocial elements back into the fold, and was paid for his service in teen pussy.

Although his appetite for girls seemed boundless, he prided himself on never having knowingly slept with anyone below the age of consent or anyone who'd been sexually abused. He was skilled at identifying the latter, sometimes by the fecal or septic imagery they used to describe themselves, sometimes merely by a certain telltale way they giggled, and over the years his instincts had led to successful prosecutions. When a girl who'd been abused came on to him, he didn't walk away, he ran. He had a phobia of associating himself with predation.

If his scruples still left an apparent residuum of sickness—a worry about what it meant that he felt compelled to repeat the same pattern with girl after girl—he chalked it up to the sickness of the country he lived in. The Republic had defined him, he continued to exist entirely in relation to it, and apparently one of the roles that it demanded he play was Assibräuteaufreisser. Living in the basement of a rectory, eating bad food out of cans, he felt entitled to the one small luxury that his vestigial privileges afforded. Lacking a bank account, he kept a mental coitus ledger and regularly checked it, making sure that he remembered not only first and last names but the exact order in which he'd had them.

His tally stood at fifty-two, late in the winter of 1987, when he made a mistake. The problem was that No. 53, a small redhead, Petra, temporarily residing with her unemployable father in a cold-water Prenzlauer Berg squat, was, like her father, extremely religious. Interestingly, this in no way dampened her hots for Andreas (or his for her), but it did mean that she considered sex in a church disrespectful to God. Andreas tried to relieve her of this superstition but succeeded only in making her very agitated about the state of his soul, and he saw that he risked losing her altogether if he failed to keep his soul in play. Once he'd set his mind on sealing a deal, he could think of nothing else, and since he had no close friend whose flat he could borrow and no money for a hotel room, and since the weather on the crucial night was well below freezing, the only way he could think to gain access to Petra's pants was to board the S-Bahn with her and take her out to his parents' dacha on the Müggelsee. His parents rarely used it in the winter and never during the work week.

The dacha, walkable from the train

station, was set on a large plot of piney land that sloped gently to the lakeshore. By feel, in the dark, Andreas located the key hanging from the customary eave. When he went inside with Petra and turned on a light, he was disoriented to find the living room outfitted with the faux-Danish furniture of his childhood in the city. He hadn't been out to the dacha in six years. His mother had apparently redecorated the city flat in the meantime.

"Whose house is this?" Petra said, impressed with the amenities.

"Never mind that."

He turned on the electric furnace and led Petra down the hall to the room that had once been his. "Can I take a bath?" she said.

"You don't have to on my account." "It's been four days."

He didn't want to deal with a damp bath towel; it would have to be dried and folded before they left. But it was important to put the girl and her desires first.

"It's fine," he assured her pleasantly. "Take a bath."

He sat down on his old bed and heard her lock the bathroom door behind her. In the weeks that followed, the click of this lock became the seed of his paranoia: why had she locked the door when he was the only other person in the house? But maybe it was just his bad luck that she was immobilized in the bathtub with the water

still running, the flow in the pipes loud enough to cover the sound of an approaching vehicle and footsteps, when he heard a pounding on the front door and then a barking: "Volkspolizei!"

The water abruptly stopped. Andreas thought about making a run for it, but he was trapped by the fact that Petra was in the tub. Reluc-

tantly, he heaved himself off the bed and went and opened the front door. Two *VoPos* were backlit by the flashers and headlights of their cruiser.

"Yes?" he said.

"Identification, please."

"What's this about?"

"Your identification, please."

If the policemen had had tails, they wouldn't have been wagging; if they'd

had pointed ears, they would have been flattened back. The senior officer frowned at the little blue book and handed it to the junior, who carried it back toward the cruiser.

"Do you have permission to be here?"
"In a certain sense."

"Are you alone?"

"As you find me." Andreas beckoned politely. "Would you care to come in?"

"I'll need to use the telephone."
"Of course."

The officer entered circumspectly. Andreas guessed that he was more wary of the house's owners than of any armed thugs who might be lurking in it.

"This is my parents' place," he explained.

"We're acquainted with the Under-Secretary. We're not acquainted with you. No one has permission to be in this house tonight."

"I've been here for fifteen minutes. Your vigilance is commendable."

"We saw the lights."

"Really highly commendable."

From the bathroom came a single plink of falling water; in hindsight, Andreas found it noteworthy that the officer had shown no interest in the bathroom. The man simply paged through a shabby black notebook, found a number, and dialled it on the living-room extension.

"Mr. Under-Secretary?" The officer identified himself and tersely reported the presence of an intruder who claimed

to be a relative. Then he said yes several times.

"Tell him I'd like to speak to him," Andreas said.

The officer made a silencing gesture.

"I want to talk to him."

"Of course, right away," the officer said to the Under-Secretary.

Andreas tried to grab the receiver. The officer shoved

him in the chest and knocked him to the floor.

"No, he's trying to take the phone.... That's right.... Yes, of course. I'll tell him.... Understood, Mr. Under-Secretary."The officer hung up the phone and looked down at Andreas. "You're to leave immediately and never come back."

"Got it."

"If you ever come back, there will be

consequences. The Under-Secretary wanted to make sure you understood that. But me personally? I hope you come back, and I hope I'm on duty when you do."

When the police were gone, Andreas knocked on the bathroom door and told Petra to turn off the light and wait for him. He turned off the other lights and went out into the night, heading toward the train station. At the first bend in the lane, he saw the cruiser parked and gave the officers a little wave. At the next bend, he ducked behind some pine trees to wait until they drove away. The evening had been damaging, and he wasn't about to waste it. But when he was finally able to creep back into the dacha and found Petra cowering on his boyhood bed, mewling with fear of the police, he was too enraged at his humiliation to care about her pleasure. He ordered her to do this and do that, in the dark, and it ended with her weeping and saying she hated him—a feeling that, by that point, he entirely reciprocated. He never saw her again.

He spent the following spring and summer depressed, and therefore all the more preoccupied with sex, but since he suddenly distrusted both himself and girls he denied himself the relief of it. Though he was jeopardizing the best job an East German in his position could hope to find, he lay on his bed all day and read British novels, detective and otherwise, forbidden and otherwise. He was seven months celibate on the October afternoon when the church's young "vicar" came to see him about the girl in the sanctuary. The vicar wore all the vestments of renegade-church cliché—full beard, check; faded jean jacket, check; mod copper crucifix, check—but was usefully insecure in the face of Andreas's superior street experience.

"I first noticed her two weeks ago," he said, sitting down on the floor. He seemed to have read in some book that sitting on the floor established rapport and conveyed Christlike humility. "Sometimes she stays in the sanctuary for an hour, sometimes until midnight. Not praying, just doing her homework. I finally asked if we could help her. She looked scared and said she was sorry—she'd thought she was allowed to be here.

I told her the church is always open to anyone in need. I wanted to start a conversation, but all she wanted was to hear that she wasn't breaking any rules."

"So?"

"Well, you are the youth counsellor."

"The sanctuary isn't exactly on my beat."

"It's understandable that you're burned out. We haven't minded your taking some time for yourself."

"I appreciate it."

"I'm concerned about the girl, though. I talked to her again yesterday and asked if she was in trouble—my fear is that she's been abused. She speaks so softly it's hard to understand her, but she seemed to be saying that the authorities are already aware of her, and so she can't go to them. Apparently she's here because she has nowhere else to go."

"Aren't we all."

"She might say more to you than to me."

"How old is she?"

"Young. Fifteen, sixteen. Also extraordinarily pretty."

Underage, abused, and pretty. Andreas sighed.

"You'll need to come out of your room at some point," the vicar suggested.

When Andreas went up to the sanctuary and saw the girl in the next-to-rear pew, he immediately experienced her beauty as an unwelcome complication, a specificity that distracted him from the universal female body part that had interested him for so long. She was dark-haired and dark-eyed, unrebelliously dressed, and was sitting with a Free German Youth erectness of posture, a textbook open in her lap. She looked like a good girl, the sort he never saw in the basement. She didn't raise her head as he approached.

"Will you talk to me?" he said.

She shook her head.

"You talked to the vicar."

"Only for a minute," she murmured.

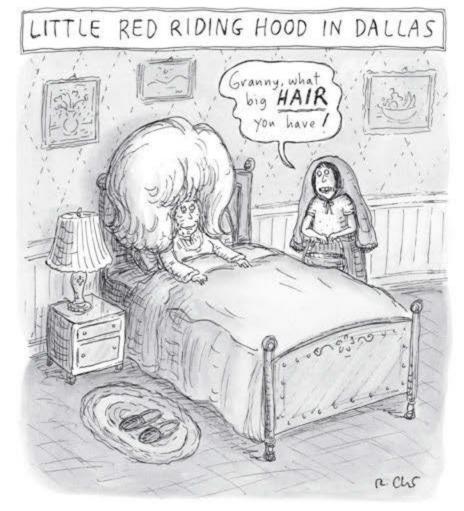
"O.K. Why don't I sit down behind you, where you don't have to see me. And then, if you—"

"Please don't do that."

"All right. I'll stay in sight." He took the pew in front of her. "I'm Andreas. I'm a counsellor here. Will you tell me your name?"

She shook her head.

"Are you here to pray?"



She smirked. "Is there a God?"

"No, of course not. Where would you get an idea like that?"

"Somebody built this church."

"Somebody was thinking wishfully."

She raised her head, as if he'd slightly interested her. "Aren't you afraid of getting in trouble?"

"With who? The minister? God's only a word he uses against the state. Nothing in this country exists except in reference to the state."

"You shouldn't say things like that."

"I'm only saying what the state itself says."

He looked down at her legs, which were of a piece with the rest of her.

"Are you very afraid of getting in trouble?" he said.

She shook her head.

"Afraid of getting someone else in trouble, then. Is that it?"

"I come here because this is nowhere. It's nice to be nowhere for a while." "Nowhere is more nowhere than this place, I agree."

She smiled faintly.

"When you look in the mirror," he said, "what do you see? Someone pretty?"

"I don't look in mirrors."

"What would you see if you did?"

"Nothing good."

"Something bad? Something harmful?"

She shrugged.

"Why didn't you want me to sit down behind you?"

"I like to see who I'm talking to."

"So we *are* talking. You were only pretending that you weren't going to talk to me. You were being self-dramatizing—playing games."

Sudden honest confrontation was one of his counselling tricks. That he was sick of these tricks didn't mean they didn't still work.

"I already know I'm bad," the girl



"Here comes the tickle monster!"

said. "You don't have to explain it to me."

"But it must be hard for you that people don't know how bad you are. They simply don't believe a girl so pretty can be so bad inside. It must be hard for you to respect people."

"I have friends."

"So did I when I was your age. But it doesn't help, does it? It's actually worse that people like me. They think I'm funny; they think I'm attractive. Only I know how bad I am inside. I'm extremely bad and extremely important. In fact, I'm the most important person in the country."

It was encouraging to see her sneer like an adolescent. "You're not important."

"Oh, but I am. You just don't know it. But you do know what it's like to be important, don't you. You're very important yourself. Everyone pays attention to you, everyone wants to be near you because you're beautiful, and then you harm them. You have to go hide in a church to give the world a rest from you."

"I wish you'd leave me alone."

"Who are you harming? Just say it." The girl lowered her head.

"You can tell me," he said. "I'm an old harmer myself."

She shivered a little and knit her fingers together in her lap. From outside, the rumble of a truck and the sharp clank of a bad gearbox entered the sanctuary and lingered in the air, which smelled of charred candlewick and tarnished brass.

"My mother," the girl murmured. The hatred in her voice was hard to square with the notion that she cared that she was doing harm. Andreas knew enough about abuse to guess what this meant.

"Where's your father?" he asked gently.

"Dead."

"And your mother remarried." She nodded.

"Is she not at home?"

"She's a night nurse at the hospital." He winced; he got the picture.

"You're safe here," he said. "This really is nowhere. There's no one you can hurt here. It's all right if you tell me your name. It doesn't matter."

"I'm Annagret," the girl said.

Their initial conversation was analogous, in its swiftness and directness, to his seductions, but in spirit it was just the opposite. Annagret's beauty was so striking, so far outside the norm, that it seemed like a pointed affront to the Republic of Bad Taste. It shouldn't have existed; it upset the orderly universe at whose center he'd always placed himself; it frightened him. He was twentyseven years old, and (unless you counted his mother when he was little) he'd never been in love, because he had yet to meet—had stopped even trying to imagine—a girl who was worth it. But here one was.

He saw her again on each of the following three evenings. He felt bad about looking forward to it just because she was so pretty, but there was nothing he could do about that. On the second night, to deepen her trust in him, he made a point of telling her that he'd slept with dozens of girls at the church. "It was a kind of addiction," he said, "but I had strict limits. I need you to believe that you personally are way outside all of them."

This was the truth but also, deep down, a total lie, and Annagret called him on it. "Everyone thinks they have strict limits," she said, "until they cross them."

"Let me be the person who proves to you that some limits really are strict."

"People say this church is a hangout for people with no morality. I didn't see how that could be true—after all, it's a church. But now you're telling me it *is* true."

"I'm sorry to be the one to disillusion you."

"There's something wrong with this country."

"I couldn't agree more."

"The Judo Club was bad enough. But to hear it's in the church..."

Annagret had an older sister, Tanja, who'd excelled at judo as an *Oberschule* student. Both sisters were university-tracked, by virtue of their test scores and their working-class credentials, but Tanja was boy-crazy and overdid the sports thing and ended up working as a secretary after her *Abitur*, spending all her free time either dancing at clubs or training and coaching at the sports center. Annagret was seven years younger and not as athletic as her sister, but they were a judo family and she'd joined the local club when she was twelve.

A regular at the sports center was a handsome older guy, Horst, who was maybe thirty and owned a large motorcycle. He came to the center mostly to maintain his impressive buffness, but he also played handball and liked to watch the advanced judo students sparring, and by and by Tanja managed to score a date with him and his bike. This led to a second date and then a third, at which point a misfortune occurred: Horst met their mother. After that, instead of taking Tanja out on his bike, he wanted to see her at home, in their tiny shitty flat, with Annagret and the mother.

Inwardly, the mother was a hard and disappointed person, the widow of a truck mechanic who'd died wretchedly of a brain tumor, but outwardly she was thirty-eight and pretty-not only prettier than Tanja but also closer in age to Horst. Ever since Tanja had failed her by not pursuing her education, the two of them had quarrelled about everything imaginable, which now included Horst, who the mother thought was too old for Tanja. When it became evident that Horst preferred her to Tanja, she didn't see how it was her fault. Annagret was luckily not at home on the fateful afternoon when Tanja stood up and said she needed air and asked Horst to take her out on his bike. Horst said there was a painful matter that the three of them needed to discuss. There were better ways for him to have handled the situation, but probably no good way. Tanja slammed the door behind her and didn't return for three days. As soon as she could, she relocated to Leipzig.

After Horst and Annagret's mother were married, the three of them moved to a notably roomy flat, where Annagret had a bedroom of her own. She felt bad

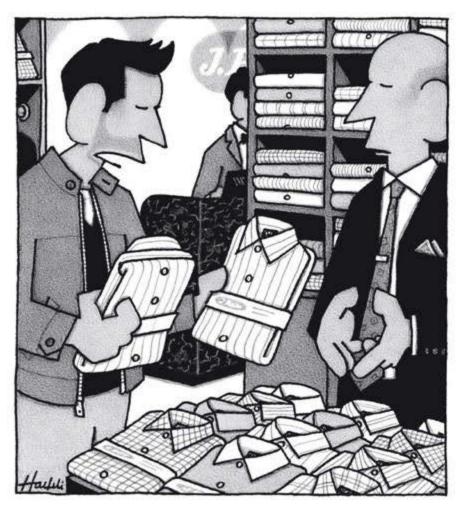
for Tanja and disapproved of her mother, but her stepfather fascinated her. His job, as a labor-collective leader at the city's largest power plant, was good but not quite good enough to explain the way he had of making things happen: the bike, the roomy flat, the oranges and Brazil nuts and Michael Jackson records he sometimes brought home. From her description of Horst, Andreas had the impression that he was one of those people whose self-love is untempered by shame and thus fully contagious. Certainly Annagret liked to be around him. He gave her rides on his motorcycle to and from the sports center. He taught her how to ride it by herself, in a parking lot. She tried to teach him some judo in return, but his upper body was so disproportionately developed that he was bad at falling. In the evening, after her mother left for her night shift, Annagret explained the extra-credit work she was doing in the hope of attending an Erweiterte Oberschule; she was impressed

by Horst's quick comprehension and told him that he should have gone to an *EOS* himself. Before long, she considered him one of her best friends. As a bonus, this pleased her mother, who seemed increasingly worn out by her nursing job and was grateful that her husband and daughter got along well. Tanja may have been lost to her, but Annagret was the good girl, her mother's hope for the future of the family.

And then one night, in the notably roomy flat, Horst came tapping on her bedroom door before she turned off her light. "Are you decent?" he said playfully.

"I'm in my pajamas," she said.

He came in and pulled up a chair by her bed. He had a very large head—Annagret couldn't explain it to Andreas, but the largeness of Horst's head seemed to her the reason that everything always worked out to his advantage. Oh, he has such a splendid head—let's just give him what he wants. Something like that. On this particular



"It boils down to which I dislike more: ironing shirts or non-iron shirts."

night, his large head was flushed from drinking.

"I'm sorry if I smell like beer," he said. "I wouldn't be able to smell it if I

could have one, too."

"You sound like you know quite a bit about beer drinking."

"Oh, it's just what they say."

"You could have a beer if you stopped training, but you won't stop training, so you can't have a beer."

She liked the joking way they had together. "But *you* train, and *you* drink beer."

"I only drank so much tonight because I have something serious to say to you."

She saw that something, indeed, was different in his face tonight. A kind of ill-controlled anguish in his eyes. Also, his hands were shaking.

"What is it?" she said, worried.

"Can you keep a secret?" he said.

"I don't know."

"Well, you have to, because you're the only person I can tell, and if you don't keep the secret we're all in trouble."

She thought about this. "Why do you have to tell me?"

"Because it concerns you. It's about your mother. Will you keep a secret?"

"I can try."

Horst took a large breath that came out beer-smelling. "Your mother is a drug addict," he said. "I married a drug addict. She steals narcotics from the hospital and uses them when she's there and also when she's at home. Did you know that?"

"No," Annagret said. But she was inclined to believe it. More and more often lately, there was something dulled about her mother.

"She's very expert at pilfering," Horst said. "No one at the hospital suspects."

"We need to talk to her about it and tell her to stop."

"Addicts don't stop without treatment. If she asks for treatment, the authorities will know she was stealing."

"But they'll be happy that she's being honest and trying to get better."

"Well, unfortunately, there's another matter. An even bigger secret. Not even your mother knows this secret. Can I tell it to you?"

He was one of her best friends, and so, after a hesitation, she said yes.

"I took an oath that I would never

tell anyone," Horst said. "I'm breaking that oath by telling you. For some years now, I've worked informally for the Ministry of State Security. I'm a well-trusted unofficial collaborator. There's an officer I meet with from time to time. I pass along information about my workers and especially about my superiors. This is necessary because the power plant is vital to our national security. I'm very fortunate to have a good relationship with the Ministry. You and your mother are very fortunate that I do. But do you understand what this means?"

"No."

"We owe our privileges to the Ministry. How do you think my officer will feel if he learns that my wife is a thief and a drug addict? He'll think I'm not trustworthy. We could lose this flat, and I could lose my position."

"But you could just tell the officer the truth about Mother. It's not your fault."

"If I tell him, your mother will lose her job. She'll probably go to prison. Is that what you want?"

"Of course not."

"So we have to keep everything secret."

"But now I wish I didn't know! Why did I have to know?"

"Because you need to help me keep the secret. Your mother betrayed us by breaking the law. You and I are the family now. She is the threat to it. We need to make sure she doesn't destroy it."

"We have to try to help her."

"You matter more to me than she does now. You are the woman in my life. See here." He put a hand on her belly and splayed his fingers. "You've become a woman."

The hand on her belly frightened her, but not as much as what he'd told her.

"A very beautiful woman," he added huskily.

"I'm feeling ticklish."

He closed his eyes and didn't take away his hand. "Everything has to be secret," he said. "I can protect you, but you have to trust me."

"Can't we just tell Mother?"

"No. One thing will lead to another, and she'll end up in jail. We're safer if she steals and takes drugs—she's very good at not getting caught."

"But if you tell her you work for the Ministry, she'll understand why she has to stop."

"I don't trust her. She's betrayed us already. I have to trust you instead."

She felt she might cry soon; her breaths were coming faster.

"You shouldn't put your hand on me," she said. "It feels wrong."

"Maybe, yes, wrong, a little bit, considering our age difference." He nodded his big head. "But look how much I trust you. We can do something that's maybe a little bit wrong because I know you won't tell anyone."

"I might tell someone."

"No. You'd have to expose our secrets, and you can't do that."

"Oh, I wish you hadn't told me anything."

"But I did. I had to. And now we have secrets together. Just you and me. Can I trust you?"

Her eyes filled. "I don't know."

"Tell me a secret of your own. Then I'll know I can trust you."

"I don't have any secrets."

"Then show me something secret. What's the most secret thing you can show me?"

The hand on her belly inched downward, and her heart began to hammer.

"Is it this?" he said. "Is this your most secret thing?"

"I don't know," she whimpered.

"It's all right. You don't have to show me. It's enough that you let me feel it." Through his hand, she could feel his whole body relax. "I trust you now."

For Annagret, the terrible thing was that she'd liked what followed, at least for a while. For a while, it was merely like a closer form of friendship. They still joked together, she still told him everything about her days at school, they still went riding together and trained at the sports club. It was ordinary life but with a secret, an extremely grownup secret thing that happened after she put on her pajamas and went to bed. While he touched her, he kept saying how beautiful she was, what perfect beauty. And because, for a while, he didn't touch her with any part of himself except his hand, she felt as if she herself were to blame, as if the whole thing had actually been her idea, as if she'd done this with her beauty and the only way to make it stop was to submit to it and experience release. She hated her body for wanting release even more than she hated it for its supposed beauty, but somehow the

TIME TRAVEL BY THOMAS McGUANE

FALL RIVER



.K., I travel through time to 1955, and I'm back in my grandmother's house at 306 Brownell Street, a "three-decker," with its portrait of my Uncle Red in his Boston Braves uniform, and, because most family members have grown up and moved away, the third floor was rented to Frances Gardella, the mother of six-year-old Hazel. Fall River is a Balkanized place, with little compassion among its duchies. Frances Gardella, Italian and husbandless, circulates silently up the back stairs. We are Irish Catholics and have other Irish Catholics in most directions, up and down North Main and down to the Taunton River. The Sullivans and the McDermotts are right across the street, with a few "shawlies," in black widow's weeds, scattered here and there. Every neighborhood has its own church, and the breakout won't begin until much later, when men like my uncles will quit trying to resist Italian, French-Canadian, and Jewish girls and marry them. I choose to travel here, to this version of America in the nineteen-fifties, because there were half as many of us in the country then as there are now, because it was a time when every town had, as Eudora Welty once said, an individual face, like that of a person.

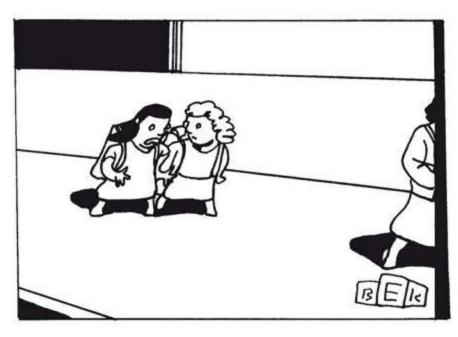
The ragman, a bundled anonymous figure who drives a rickety old horse and wagon, is known in the local parlance as "the sheeny." My first story will be about that ragman, who I imagine is secretly a soon-to-be-famous sculptor(!). The "Portagee" boy who comes looking for revenge after my brother, Johnny, breaks his arm in battle has his plaster cast doused with hot water by my Aunt Marion. Danny Shalou, a family friend, turns up one day as "Father Shalou" and is

transformed in the eyes of my daily-Mass-attending grand-mother. "Up the Flint" is the neighborhood ruled by French-Canadians, whose future denizen Emeril Lagasse will make himself into a New Orleans chef. Down Almy Street are the Cockney immigrants, also subject to one-size-fits-all Irish ridicule and known as "jicks." If there are blacks, they have been made invisible, perhaps by agreement among the warring factions. One of my uncles, a judge, declines to go to the Newport Jazz Festival to see Count Basie, on the ground that he has seen "enough of those boogies in court."

Fall River has not yet fully experienced the collapse of its textile industry. It is still a vibrant place with a huge Fourth of July parade, where, in theory, all hatchets are buried, but where my brother, dressed as a Hawaiian with a ukulele and a grass skirt (whose idea was this?), is obliged to combat ethnic adversaries, shattering his ukulele over the head of one of them. I can spot jicks like tough Brucie Kershaw from a great distance, and I give them a wide berth before they have a chance to thrash me on principle, but Johnny goes at them with whatever he has at hand.

On the corner of our street and North Main live Dr. Cooperstein and his family. Mrs. Cooperstein led the rescue of several children orphaned by the Holocaust, and Dr. Cooperstein is my grandmother's doctor. Our relations are cordial, but no mingling, period—and no means no. Unfortunately, I have a crush on the Coopersteins' beautiful daughter, Nancy, and nothing will come of it, my distant glances unreciprocated. I daydream about Nancy in my bedroom as I listen to my jazz records: Dave Brubeck, Chet Baker, the M.J.Q., various cool sounds to settle me down. I also have a deck of playing cards with bathing beauties in arousing costumes to distract me, as well as match rockets, which I light in the basement until I'm rebuked for trying to burn the house down, baseball in North Park, daring trips to the third floor's sagging porch, which is about to fall into Brownell Street and has been declared out of bounds, and rides with my Uncle Frank in his "foreign" car, a Ford (he calls it foreign because "it is entirely foreign to me"). Frank was in the O.S.S. following the German retreat from France, where his closest friend was killed in front of him by a booby-trapped Leica. I have tea with Alice McDermott, who lives with her brother, Jimmy. I fish for tautog off the rocks with Jimmy.

Half a century later, when I am long sick of the Irish business—having once detailed for my disappointed mother all the things I disliked about John F. Kennedy—I track down Nancy Cooperstein in New York, where she has had a successful life in theatre, film, and TV. I write; she writes back. I don't mention the crush. She suggests that when I come to New York we have lunch with our spouses—"That way, your wife and my husband can be bored together while we talk about Fall River." •



"It was offensive to people who haven't turned eight."

hatred made it all the more urgent. She wanted him to kiss her. She wanted him to need her. She was very bad. And maybe it made sense that she was very bad, being the daughter of a drug addict. She'd casually asked her mother if she was ever tempted to take the drugs she gave her patients. Every once in a while, yes, her mother had answered smoothly, if a little bit of something at the hospital was left unused, she or one of the other nurses might take it to calm their nerves, but it didn't mean that the person was an addict. Annagret hadn't said anything about anyone being an addict.

For Andreas, the terrible thing was how much the stepfather's pussycentrism reminded him of his own. He felt only somewhat less implicated when Annagret went on to tell him that her weeks of being touched had been merely a prelude to Horst's unzipping of his pants. It was bound to happen sometime, and yet it broke the spell that she'd been under; it introduced a third party to their secret. She didn't like this third party. She realized that it must have been spying on the two of them all along, biding its time, manipulating them like a case officer. She didn't want to see it, didn't want it near her, and when it tried to assert its authority she became afraid of being at home at night. But what could she do? The pecker knew her secrets. It knew that, if only for a while, she'd *looked forward* to being tampered with. She'd become its unofficial collaborator; she'd tacitly sworn an oath. She couldn't go to the authorities, because Horst would tell them about the drugs and they'd put her mother in jail and leave her alone with the pecker. And maybe her mother deserved to be jailed, but not if it meant that Annagret remained at home and kept harming her. She wondered if her mother took narcotics so as not to face up to which body the pecker really wanted.

This was what came out on the fourth evening of Andreas's counselling. When Annagret had finished her confession, in the chill of the sanctuary, she began to weep. Seeing someone so beautiful weeping, seeing her press her fists to her eyes like an infant, Andreas was gripped by an unfamiliar physical sensation. He was such a laugher, such an ironist, such an artist of unseriousness, that he didn't even recognize what was happening to him: he, too, was starting to cry. Annagret's beauty had broken something open in him. He felt that he was *just like her*. And so he was also crying because he loved

her, and because he couldn't have her.

"Can you help me?" she whispered.

"I don't know."

"Why did I tell you so much if you can't help me? Why did you keep asking me questions? You acted like you could help me."

He shook his head and said nothing. She put a hand on his shoulder, very lightly, but even a light touch from her was terrible. He bowed forward, shaking with sobs. "I'm so sad for you."

"But now you see what I mean. I cause harm."

"No."

"Maybe I should just be his girlfriend. Make him divorce my mother and be his girlfriend."

"No." He pulled himself together and wiped his face. "No, he's a sick fucker. I know it because I'm a little bit sick myself. I can extrapolate."

"You might have done the same thing he did...."

"Never. I swear to you. I'm like you, not him."

"But . . . if you're a little sick and you're like me, it means that I must be a little bit sick."

"That's not what I meant."

"You're right, though. I should go home and be his girlfriend. Since I'm so sick. Thank you for your help, Mr. Counsellor."

He took her by the shoulders and made her look at him. There was nothing but distrust in her eyes now. "I want to be your friend," he said.

"We all know where being friends goes."

"You're wrong. Stay here, and let's think. Be my friend."

She pulled away from him and crossed her arms tightly.

"We can go directly to the Stasi," he said. "He broke his oath to them. The minute they think he might embarrass them, they'll drop him like a hot potato. As far as they're concerned, he's just some bottom-tier collaborator—he's nobody."

"No," she said. "They'll think I'm lying. I didn't tell you everything I did—it's too embarrassing. I did things to interest him."

"It doesn't matter. You're fifteen. In

the eyes of the law, you have no responsibility. Unless he's very stupid, he's got to be scared out of his mind right now. You've got all the power."

"But, even if they believe me, everybody's life is ruined, including mine. I won't have a home. I won't be able to go to university. Even my sister will hate me. I think it's better if I just give him what he wants until I'm old enough to move away."

"That's what you want."

She shook her head. "I wouldn't be here if that were what I wanted. But now I see that nobody can help me."

Andreas didn't know what to say. What he wanted was for her to come and live in the basement of the rectory with him. He could protect her, home-school her, practice English with her, train her as a counsellor for atrisk youth, and be her friend, the way King Lear imagined being friends with Cordelia, following the news of the court from a distance, laughing at who was in, who was out. Maybe in time they'd be a couple, the couple in the basement, leading their own private life.

"We can find room for you here," he said.

She shook her head again. "He's already upset that I don't come home until midnight. He thinks I'm out with boys. If I didn't come home at all, he'd turn my mother in."

"He said that to you?"

"He's an evil person. For a long time, I thought the opposite, but not anymore. Now everything he says to me is some kind of threat. He's not going to stop until he gets everything he wants."

A different sensation, not tears, a wave of hatred, came over Andreas. "I can kill him," he said.

"That's not what I meant by helping me."

"Somebody's life has to be ruined," he said, pursuing the logic of his hatred. "Why not his and mine? I'm already in a kind of prison. The food can't be any worse in a real prison. I can read books at state expense. You can go to school and help your mother with her problem."

She made a derisive sound. "That's a good plan. Trying to kill a bodybuilder."

"Obviously I wouldn't warn him in advance."

She looked at him as if he couldn't possibly be serious. Until that moment, she would have been right. Levity was his métier. But it was harder to see the ridiculous side of the casual destruction of lives in the Republic when the life in question was Annagret's. He was falling in love with this girl, and there was nothing he could do with the feeling, no way to act on it, no way to make her believe that she should trust him. She must have seen some of this in his face, because her own expression changed.

"You can't kill him," she said quietly. "He's just very sick. Everyone in my family is sick, everyone I touch is sick, including me. I just need *help*."

"There is no help for you in this country."

"That can't be right."

"It's the truth."

She stared for a while at the pews in front of them or at the cross behind the altar, forlorn and murkily lit. After a time, her breaths became quicker and sharper. "I wouldn't cry if he died," she said. "But I should be the one to do it, and I could never do it. Never, never. I'd sooner be his girlfriend."

On more careful reflection, Andreas didn't really want to kill Horst, either. He could imagine surviving prison, but the label *murderer* didn't accord with his self-image. The label would follow him forever, he wouldn't be able to like himself as much as he did now, and neither would other people. It was all very well to be an *Assibräuteaufreisser*, a troller for sex among the antisocial—the label was appropriately ridiculous. But *murderer* was not.

"So," Annagret said, standing up.
"It's nice of you to offer. It was nice of you to listen to my story and not be too disgusted."

"Wait, though," he said, because another thought had occurred to him: if she were his accomplice, he might not automatically be caught, and, even if he were caught, her beauty and his love for her would adhere to what the two of them had done. He wouldn't simply be



"When your only tool is a trebuchet, every problem looks like a siege."

a *murderer*; he'd be the person who'd eliminated the molester of this singular girl.

"Do you trust me?" he said.

"I like that I can talk to you. I don't think you're going to tell anyone my secrets." She paused. "I don't want to be your girlfriend," she added, "if that's what you're asking. I don't want to be anyone's girlfriend. I just want to be normal again."

"That's not going to happen."

Her expression became desolate. The natural thing would have been to put his arms around her and console her, but nothing about their situation was natural. He felt completely powerless—another new sensation and one he didn't like one bit. He figured that she was about to walk away and never come back. But instead she drew a stabilizing breath and said, without looking at him, "How would you do it?"

In a low, dull voice, as if in a trance, he told her how. She had to stop coming to the church and go home and lie to Horst. She had to say that she'd been going to a church to sit by herself and pray and seek God's guidance, and that her mind was clearer now. She was ready to give herself fully to Horst, but she couldn't do it at home, out of respect for her mother. She knew a better place, a romantic place, a safe place where some of her friends went on weekends to drink beer and make out. If he cared about her feelings, he would take her there.

"You know a place like that?"

"I do," Andreas said.

"Why would you do this for me?"

"Who better to do it for? You deserve a good life. I'm willing to take a risk for that."

"It's not a risk. It's guaranteed—they'd definitely catch you."

"O.K., thought experiment: if it were guaranteed they *wouldn't*, would you let me do it?"

"I'm the one who should be killed. I've been doing something terrible to my mother."

He sighed. "I like you a lot, Annagret. I'm not so fond of the self-dramatizing, though."

This was the right thing to have said—he saw it immediately. Not a full-bore burning look from her but unmistakably a spark of fire. He almost resented his loins for warming at the sight; he didn't want this to be just another se-

THE LORDLY HUDSON

After my family died there was a replacement family. I lost my dog but soon a replacement one arrived in tassel bow the color of goose stuffing and liver.

My replacement house followed after the real one was blown apart. A replacement head and tunic of lilac and locust came in the mail for me soon after.

Later, replacement hands retrofitted my actual ones, their lines resembling the rivers that span the district where I was born between the replacement Garden

State Parkway and the Turnpike. Replacement light and replacement shadow congregate on the ceiling though it's still the same old ceiling above my bed.

Blue replacement pelicans must be lovely to behold. A replacement sun rises in the East and sometimes sets softly like the smell of burning hair in the West.

In my former life, "The Lordly Hudson" was just one of my favorite poems, its serenade and arcane grandeur somewhat inspiring then. Still, the replacement version

doesn't really do much for my replacement brain's chronic synaptic degradation. I own a banjo. It sits atop the debris of my privileged life: socks, shoehorns,

duction. He wanted her to be the way out of the wasteland of seduction he'd been living in.

"I could never do it," she said, turning away from him.

"Sure. We're just talking."

"You self-dramatize, too. You said you were the most important person in the country."

He could have pointed out that such a ridiculous claim had to be ironic, but he saw that this was only half true. Irony was slippery; the sincerity of Annagret was firm. "You're right," he said gratefully. "I self-dramatize, too. It's another way the two of us are alike."

She gave a petulant shrug.

"But since we're only talking, how well do you think you could ride a motorbike?"

"I just want to be normal again. I don't want to be like you."

"O.K. We'll try to make you normal again. But it would help if you could ride his motorbike. I've never been on one myself."

"Riding it is sort of like judo," she said. "You try to go with it, not against it."

Sweet judo girl. She continued like this, closing the door on him and then opening it a little, rejecting possibilities that she then turned around and allowed, until it got so late that she had to go home. They agreed that there was no point in her returning to the church unless she was ready to act on their plan or move into the basement. These were the only two ideas either of them had.

Once she stopped coming to the church, Andreas had no way to communicate with her. For the following six afternoons, he went up to the sanctuary and waited until dinnertime. He was pretty sure he'd never see her again. She was just a schoolgirl, she didn't care about him, or at least not enough, and she didn't hate her stepfather as murderously as he did. She would lose her nerve—either go alone to the Stasi or submit to worse

erotic cassettes. No need one replacement afternoon for nostalgia to fill my lungs but like mercury it does, the way sleep singes our casual bodies each evening.

Nothing's missing yet sadness falls in me like something. Replacement dad knows the pain, son. Replacement me crawls to the fridge and opens the freezer door, its glow

enshrining my dumb face. About my replacement self, I feel only average levels of attachment and revulsion, inconsequence. One day you make love to a replacement

having finally bedded the person you loved. And before long, replacement you lounges with replacement them on a green sofa that is a fine forgery of itself. You could

barge in, copying and pasting random saws from heroes, but your voice would only mean your insides curdle to nothing but birds. Replacement kids hoe bisexual gardens.

Replacement agents sprawl in saunas waiting for their spines to flake into petunias, mulch and tendril, insect and screed. And whoever you are probably just left a little while ago.

—Adam Fitzgerald

abuse. As the afternoons passed, Andreas felt some relief at the prospect. In terms of having an experience, seriously contemplating a murder was almost as good as going through with it, and it had the added benefit of not entailing risk. Between prison and no prison, no prison was clearly preferable. What tormented him was the thought that he wouldn't lay eyes on Annagret again. He pictured her studiously practicing her throws at the Judo Club, being the good girl, and felt very sorry for himself. He refused to picture what might be happening to her at home at night.

She showed up on the seventh afternoon, looking pale and starved and wearing the same ugly rain jacket that half the teen-agers in the Republic were wearing. A nasty cold drizzle was falling on Siegfeldstrasse. She took the rearmost pew and bowed her head and kneaded her pasty, bitten hands. Seeing her again, after a week of merely imagining her, Andreas was overwhelmed by the contrast between love and lust. Love turned out to be soul-crippling, stomach-turning, weirdly claustrophobic: a sense of endlessness bottled up inside him, endless weight, endless potential, with only the small outlet of a shivering pale girl in a bad rain jacket to escape through. Touching her was the farthest thing from his mind. The impulse was to throw himself at her feet.

He sat down not very close to her. For a long time, for several minutes, they didn't speak. Love altered the way he perceived her uneven mouth-breathing and her trembling hands—again the disparity between the largeness of her mattering and the ordinariness of the sounds she made, the everydayness of her schoolgirl fingers. He had the strange thought that it was wrong, wrong as in *evil*, to think of killing a man who, in however sick a way, was also in love with her, that he instead ought to have compassion for that man.

"So I have to be at the Judo Club," she said finally. "I can't stay long."

"It's good to see you," he said. Love made this feel like the most remarkably true statement he'd ever made.

"So just tell me what to do."

"Maybe now is not a good time. Maybe you want to come back some other day."

She shook her head, and some of her hair fell over her face. She didn't push it back. "Just tell me what to do."

"Shit," he said honestly. "I'm as scared as you are."

"Not possible."

"Why not just run away? Come and live here. We'll find a room for you."

She began to shiver more violently. "If you won't help me, I'll do it myself. You think you're bad, but I'm the bad one."

"No, here, here." He took her shaking hands in his own. They were icy and so ordinary, so ordinary; he loved them. "You're a very good person. You're just in a bad dream."

She turned her face to him, and through her hair he saw the burning look. "Will you help me out of it?"

"It's what you want?"

"You said you'd help me."

Could anyone be worth it? He did wonder, but he set down her hands and took a map that he'd drawn from his jacket pocket.

"This is where the house is," he said. "You'll need to take the S-Bahn out there by yourself first, so you'll know exactly where you're going. Do it after dark and watch out for cops. When you go back there on the motorcycle, have him cut the lights at the last corner, and then go all the way back behind the house. The driveway curves around behind. And then make sure you take your helmets off. What night are we talking about?"

"Thursday."

"What time does your mother's shift start?"

"Ten o'clock."

"Don't go home for dinner. Tell him you'll meet him by his bike at nine-thirty. You don't want anyone to see you leaving the building with him."

"O.K. Where will you be?"

"Don't worry about that. Just head for the back door. Everything will be the way we talked about."

She convulsed a little, as if she might retch, but she mastered herself and put

the map in her jacket pocket. "Is that all?" she said.

"You suggested it to him. The date." She nodded quickly.

"I'm so sorry," he said.

"Is that all?"

"Just one other thing. Will you look at me?"

She remained hunched over, like a guilty dog, but she turned her head.

"You have to be honest with me," he said. "Are you doing this because I want it or because you want it?"

"What does it matter?"

"A lot. Everything."

She looked down at her lap again. "I just want it to be over. Either way."

"You know we won't be able to see each other for a very long time, whichever way it goes. No contact of any kind."

"That's almost better."

"Think about it, though. If you came here instead, we could see each other every day."

"I don't think that's better."

He looked up at the stained ceiling of the sanctuary and considered what a cosmic joke it was that the first person his heart had freely chosen was someone he not only couldn't have but wouldn't even be allowed to see. And yet he felt all right about it. His powerlessness itself was sweet. Who would have guessed that? Various clichés about love, stupid adages and song lyrics, flashed through his head.

"I'm late for judo," Annagret said. "I have to go."

He closed his eyes so that he didn't have to see her leave.

The drizzle persisted through the week, with intermittent harder showers, and for three nights he obsessed about the rain, wondering whether it was good or bad. When he managed to sleep for a few minutes, he had dreams that he ordinarily would have found laughably obvious—a body not in the place where he'd left it, feet protruding from under his bed when people entered his room—but which under the circumstances were true nightmares, of the sort from which he ordinarily would have been relieved to awaken. But being awake was even worse now. He considered the

plus side of rain: no moon. And the minus side: deep footprints and tire tracks. The plus side: easy digging and slippery stairs. And the minus side: slippery stairs. The plus side: cleansing. And the minus side: mud everywhere. . . . The anxiety had a life of its own; it churned and churned. The only thought that brought relief was that Annagret was unquestionably suffering even more. The relief was to

feel connected to her. The relief was love, the astonishment of experiencing her distress more keenly than he experienced his own, of caring more about her than about himself. As long as he could hold that thought and exist within it, he could halfway breathe.

At three-thirty on Thursday afternoon he packed a knapsack with a hunk of

bread, a pair of gloves, a roll of piano wire, and an extra pair of pants. He had the feeling that he'd slept not at all the previous night, but maybe he had, maybe a little bit. He left the rectory basement by the back stairs and emerged into the courtyard, where a light rain was falling. Earnest embarrassments were smoking cigarettes in the ground-floor meeting room, the lights already on.

On the train he took a window seat and pulled the hood of his rain parka over his face, pretending to sleep. When he got out at Rahnsdorf, he kept his eyes on the ground and moved more slowly than the early commuters, letting them disperse. The sky was nearly dark. As soon as he was alone he walked more briskly, as if he were out for exercise. Two cars, not police, hissed past him. In the drizzle he looked like nobody. When he rounded the last bend before the house and didn't see anyone on the street, he broke into a lope. The soil here was sandy and drained well. At least on the gravel of the driveway, he wasn't leaving footprints.

No matter how many times he'd gone over the logistics in his head, he couldn't quite see how it would work: how he could conceal himself completely and still be within striking distance. He was desperate to keep Annagret out of it, to keep her safe in her essential goodness, but he was afraid that he wouldn't be able to. His anxiety the previous night had swirled around the image of some

awful three-person scrum that would leave her trust in him shattered.

He strung the piano wire between two railing posts, across the second of the wooden steps to the back porch. Tightening it at a level low enough that she could not too obviously step over it, he dug the wire into the wood of the posts and flaked some paint off them, but there was nothing to be done about that. In the middle of his first night of anxiety, he'd got out of bed and gone to the rectory's basement staircase to conduct a test of tripping on the second step. He'd been surprised by how hard he pitched forward, in spite of knowing he was going to trip-he'd nearly sprained his wrist. But he wasn't as athletic as the stepfather, he wasn't a bodybuilder....

He went around to the front of the dacha and took off his boots. He wondered if the two *VoPos* he'd met the previous winter were patrolling again tonight. He remembered the senior one's hope that they would meet again. "We'll see," he said aloud. Hearing himself, he noticed that his anxiety had abated. Much better to be doing than to be thinking about doing. He entered the house and took the key to the toolshed from the hook where it had hung since he was little.

He went outside again and put on his boots and stepped carefully around the edge of the back yard, mindful of footprints. Once he was safely in the toolshed, which had no windows, he groped for a flashlight and found one on the usual shelf. In its light, he checked inventory. Wheelbarrow—yes. Shovel—yes. He was shocked to see, by his watch, that it was already nearly six o'clock. He turned off the flashlight and took it out into the drizzle with the shovel.

The spot he had in mind was behind the shed, where his father piled yard waste. Beyond the pile, the pines were sparse, their fallen needles lying thick on soil furrowed by the frost heaves of winters past. The darkness was neartotal here, the only light a few grayish panels between the surrounding trees, in the direction of the West's greater brightness. His mind was now working so well that he thought to remove his watch and put it in his pocket, lest the shock of digging damage it. He turned on the flashlight and laid it on the ground

while he cleared needles, setting aside the most freshly fallen in a separate pile. Then he turned out the light and dug.

Chopping through roots was the worst-hard work and loud work. But the neighboring houses were dark, and he stopped every few minutes to listen. All he heard was the rustle of rain and the faint generic sounds of civilization that collected in the basin of the lake. Again he was glad of the soil's sandiness. He was soon into gravel, noisier to dig through but harder to slip on. He worked implacably, chopping roots, levering out larger stones, until he recalled, with some panic, that his sense of time was messed up. He scrambled out of the hole for the flashlight. Eight-forty-five. The hole was more than a half-metre deep. Not deep enough, but a good start.

He made himself keep digging, but now his anxiety was back, prompting him to wonder what time it was, what time. He knew he had to hold out and keep doing, not thinking, for as long as he could, but he soon became too anxious to wield the shovel with any force. It wasn't even nine-thirty, Annagret hadn't even met her stepfather in the city yet, but he climbed out of the hole and forced himself to eat some bread. Bite, chew, swallow, bite, chew, swallow. The problem was that he was parched and hadn't brought water.

Fully out of his head, he dropped the bread on the ground and wandered back to the shed with the shovel. He could almost not remember where he was. He started to clean his gloved hands on the wet grass but was too out of his head to finish the job. He wandered around the edge of the yard, stepped wrong and left a deep footprint in a flower bed, dropped to his knees and madly filled it, and managed to leave an even deeper footprint. By now he was convinced that minutes were passing like seconds without his knowing it. From a great distance he could discern his ridiculousness. He could picture himself spending the rest of the night leaving footprints while cleaning his hands after filling footprints he'd left while cleaning his hands, but he also sensed the danger of picturing this. If he let his resolution be taken over by silliness, he was liable to put down the shovel and go back to the city and laugh at the idea of himself as a killer. Be the former Andreas, not the man he wanted

to be now. He saw it clearly in those terms. He had to kill the man he'd always been, by killing someone else.

"Fuck it," he said, deciding to leave the deep footprint unfilled. He didn't know how long he'd knelt on the grass having extraneous and postponable thoughts, but he feared that it was a lot more time than it had felt like. Again from a great distance, he observed that he was thinking crazily. And maybe this was what craziness was: an emergency valve to relieve the pressure of unbearable anxiety.

Interesting thought, bad time to be having it. There were a lot of small things he should have been remembering to do now, in the proper sequence, and wasn't. He found himself on the front porch again without knowing how he'd got there. This couldn't be a good sign. He took off his muddy boots and his slippery socks and went inside. What else, what else, what else? He'd left his gloves

and the shovel on the front porch. He went back out for them and came inside again. What else? Shut the door and lock it. Unlock the back door. Practice opening it.

Extraneous bad thought: were the whorls of toe prints unique, like those of fingerprints? Was he leaving traceable toe prints?

Worse thought: what if the fucker thought to bring a flashlight or routinely carried one on his bike?

Even worse thought: the fucker probably did routinely carry a flashlight on his bike, in case of a nighttime breakdown.

A still worse thought was available to Andreas—namely, that Annagret would use her body, would feign uncontrollable lust, to forestall any business with a flashlight—but he was determined not to entertain it, not even for the relief from his terrible new anxiety, because it would entail being conscious



"She'll be back."

of an obvious fact, which was that she must already have used her body and feigned lust to get the fucker out here. The only way Andreas could stand to picture the killing was to leave her entirely out of it. If he let her into itallowed himself to acknowledge that she was using her body to make it happen—the person he wanted to kill was no longer her stepfather but himself. For putting her through a thing like that, for dirtying her in the service of his plan. If he was willing to kill the stepfather for dirtying her, it logically followed that he should kill himself for it. And so, instead, he entertained the thought that, even with a flashlight, the stepfather might not see the trip wire.

He'd heard it said that every suicide was a proxy for a murder that the perpetrator could only symbolically commit; every suicide a murder gone awry. He was prepared to feel universally grateful to Annagret, but right now he was more narrowly grateful that she was bringing him a person worth killing. He imagined himself purified and humbled afterward, freed finally of his sordid history. Even if he ended up in

prison, she would literally have saved his life.

But where was his own flashlight?

It wasn't in one of his pockets. It could be anywhere, although he surely hadn't dropped it randomly in the driveway. Without it, he couldn't see his watch, and without seeing his watch he couldn't ascertain whether he had time to put his boots on and return to the back yard and find the flashlight and ascertain whether he did, in fact, have time to be looking for it. The universe, its logic, suddenly felt crushing to him.

There was, however, a small light above the kitchen stove. Turn it on for one second and check his watch? He had too complicated a mind to be a killer, too much imagination for it. He could see no rational risk in turning on the stove light, but part of having a complicated mind was understanding its limits, understanding that it couldn't think of everything. Stupidity mistook itself for intelligence, whereas intelligence knew its own stupidity. An interesting paradox. But it didn't answer the question of whether he should turn the light on.

And why was it so important to look

at his watch? He couldn't actually think of why. This went to his point about intelligence and its limits. He leaned the shovel against the back door and sat down cross-legged on the mud rug. Then he worried that the shovel was going to fall over. He reached to steady it with such an unsteady hand that he knocked it over. The noise was catastrophic. He jumped to his feet and turned on the stove light long enough to check his watch. He still had at least thirty minutes, probably more like forty-five.

He sat down on the rug again and fell into a state that was like a fever dream in every respect except that he was fully aware of being asleep. It was like being dead without the relief from torment. And maybe the adage had it backward, maybe every murder was a suicide gone awry, because what he was feeling, besides an all-permeating compassion for his tormented self, was that he had to follow through with the killing to put himself out of his misery. He wouldn't be the one dying, but he might as well have been, because the relief that would follow the killing had a deathlike depth and finality in prospect.

For no apparent reason, he snapped out of his dream and into a state of chill clarity. Had he heard something? There was nothing but the trickle and patter of light rain. It seemed to him that a lot of time had passed. He stood up and grasped the handle of the shovel. He was having a new bad thought—that, for all his care in planning, he'd somehow neglected to consider what he would do if Annagret and her stepfather simply didn't show up; he'd been so obsessed with logistics that he hadn't noticed this enormous blind spot, and now, because the weekend was coming and his parents might be out here, he was facing the task of refilling the hole that he'd dug for nothing—when he heard a low voice outside the kitchen window.

A girl's voice. Annagret.

Where was the bike? How could he not have heard the bike? Had they walked it down the driveway? The bike was essential.

He heard a male voice, somewhat louder. They were going around behind the house. It was all happening so quickly. He was shaking so much that he could hardly stand. He didn't dare touch the doorknob for fear of making a sound.



"I'll call you back, Jake—my secretary just crept into my office like a stray cat crossing the tracks of the midnight train to Murdertown."

"The key's on a hook," he heard Annagret say.

He heard her feet on the steps. And then: a floor-shaking thud, a loud grunt.

He grabbed the doorknob and turned it the wrong way and then the right way. As he ran out, he thought he didn't have the shovel, but he did. It was in his hands, and he brought the convex side of its blade down hard on the dark shape looming up in front of him. The body collapsed on the steps. He was a murderer now.

Pausing to make sure of where the body's head was, he raised the shovel over his shoulder and hit the head so hard he heard the skull crack. Everything so far fully within the bounds of planned logistics. Annagret was somewhere to his left, making the worst sound he'd ever heard, a moan-keen-retch-strangulation sound. Without looking in her direction, he scrambled down past the body, dropped the shovel, and pulled the body off the steps by its feet. Its head was on its side now. He picked up the shovel and hit the head on the temple as hard as he could, to make sure. At the second crack of skull, Annagret gave a terrible cry.

"It's over," he said, breathing hard. "There won't be any more of it."

He dimly saw her moving on the porch, coming to the railing. Then he heard the strangely childish and almost dear sounds of her throwing up. He didn't feel sick himself. More like post-orgasmic, immensely weary and even more immensely sad. He wasn't going to throw up, but he began to cry, making his own childish sounds. He dropped the shovel, sank to his knees, and sobbed. His mind was empty, but not of sadness.

The drizzle was so fine it was almost a mist. When he'd cried himself dry, he felt so tired that his first thought was that he and Annagret should go to the police and turn themselves in. He didn't see how he could do what still had to be done. Killing had brought no relief at all—what had he been thinking? The relief would be to turn himself in at the police station.

Annagret had been still while he cried, but now she came down from the porch and crouched by him. At the touch of her hand on his shoulder, he sobbed again.

"Sh-h, sh-h," she said.



"If you are amenable to that offer, I am prepared to respond with this facial expression."

She put her face to his wet cheek. The feel of her skin, the mercy of her warm proximity: his weariness evaporated.

"I must smell like vomit," she said.

"No."

"Is he dead?"

"He must be."

"This is the real bad dream. Right now. Before wasn't so bad. This is the real bad."

"I know."

She began to cry voicelessly, huffingly, and he took her in his arms. He could feel her tension escaping in the form of whole-body tremors, and there was nothing he could do with his compassion except hold her until the tremors subsided. When they finally did, she wiped her nose on her sleeve and pressed her face to his. She opened her mouth against his cheek, a kind of kiss. They were partners, and it would have been natural to go inside the house and seal their partnership, and this was how he knew for certain that his love for her was pure: he pulled away and stood up.

"Don't you like me?" she whispered. "Actually, I love you."

"I want to come and see you. I don't care if they catch us."

"I want to see you, too. But it's not right. Not safe. Not for a long time."

In the darkness, at his feet, she seemed to slump. "Then I'm completely alone."

"You can think of me thinking of you, because that's what I'll be doing whenever you think of me."

She made a little snorting sound, possibly mirthful. "I barely even know you."

"Safe to say I don't make a habit of killing people."

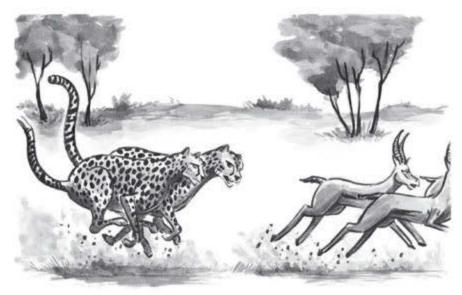
"It's a terrible thing," she said, "but I guess I should thank you. Thank you for killing him." She made another possibly mirthful sound. "Just hearing myself say that makes me all the more sure that I'm the bad one. I made him want me, and then I made you do this."

Andreas was aware that time was passing. "What happened with the motorcycle?"

She didn't answer.

"Is the motorcycle here?"

"No." She took a deep breath. "He was doing maintenance after dinner. He didn't have it put back together when I went to meet him—he needed some



PANDOLPH

"I can never tell if I'm hungry or just bored."

new part. He said we should go out some other night."

Not very ardent of him, Andreas thought.

"I thought maybe he'd gotten suspicious," she said. "I didn't know what to do, but I said I really wanted it to be tonight."

Again, Andreas suppressed the thought of how she'd persuaded the stepfather.

"So we took the train," she said.

"Not good."

"I'm sorry!"

"No, it was the right thing to do, but it makes things harder for us."

"We didn't sit together. I said it was safer not to."

Soon other riders on the train would be seeing the missing man's picture in the newspaper, maybe even on television. The entire plan had hinged on the motorcycle. But Andreas needed to keep her morale up. "You're very smart," he said. "You did the right thing. I'm just worried that even the earliest train won't get you home in time."

"My mother goes straight to bed when she comes home. I left my bedroom door closed."

"You thought of that."

"Just to be safe."

"You're very, very smart."

"Not smart enough. They're going to

catch us. I'm sure of it. We shouldn't have taken the train, I hate trains, people stare at me, they'll remember me. But I didn't know what else to do."

"Just keep being smart. The hardest part is behind you."

She clutched his arms and pulled herself to her feet. "Please kiss me," she said. "Just once, so I can remember it."

He kissed her forehead.

"No, on the mouth," she said. "We're going to be in jail forever. I want to have kissed you. It's all I've been thinking about. It's the only way I got through the week."

He was afraid of where a kiss might lead—time was continuing to pass—but he needn't have been. Annagret kept her lips solemnly closed. She must have been seeking the same thing he was. A cleaner way, an escape from the filth. For his part, the darkness of the night was a blessing: if he could have seen the look in her eyes, he might not have been able to let go of her.

While she waited in the driveway, away from the body, he went inside the house. The kitchen felt steeped in the evil of his lying in ambush there, the evil contrast between a world in which Horst had been alive and the world where he was dead, but he forced himself to put his head under the faucet and gulp down water. Then he went to the front porch

and put his socks and boots back on. He found the flashlight in one of the boots.

When he came around the side of the house, Annagret ran to him and kissed him heedlessly, with open mouth, her hands in his hair. She was heartbreakingly teen-aged, and he didn't know what to do. He wanted to give her what she wanted—he wanted it himself—but he was aware that what she ought to want, in the larger scheme, was not to get caught. He took her face in his gloved hands and said, "I love you, but we have to stop."

She shivered and burrowed into him. "Let's have one night and then be caught. I've done all I can."

"Let's not be caught and then have many nights."

"He wasn't such a bad person, he just needed help."

"You need to help me for one minute. One minute and then you can lie down and sleep."

"It's too awful."

"All you have to do is steady the wheelbarrow. You can keep your eyes shut. Can you do that for me?"

In the darkness, he thought he could see her nod. He left her and picked his way back to the toolshed. It would be a lot easier to get the body into the wheelbarrow if she helped him lift it, but he found that he welcomed the prospect of wrangling the body by himself. He was protecting her from direct contact, keeping her as safe as he could, and he wanted her to know it.

The body was in coveralls, work clothes from the power plant, suitable for motorcycle maintenance but not for a hot date in the country. It was hard to escape the conclusion that the fucker really hadn't intended to come out here tonight, but Andreas did his best not to think about it. He rolled the body onto its back. It was heavy with gym-trained muscle. He found a wallet and zipped it into his own jacket, and then he tried to lift the body by its coveralls, but the fabric ripped. He was obliged to apply a bear hug to wrestle the head and torso onto the wheelbarrow.

The wheelbarrow tipped over sideways. Neither he nor Annagret said anything. They just tried again.

There were further struggles behind the shed. She had to help him by pushing on the wheelbarrow's handles while he pulled from the front. The footprint situation was undoubtedly appalling. When they were finally beside the grave, they stood and caught their breath. Water was softly dripping from pine needles, the scent of the needles mixing with the sharp and vaguely cocoa smell of freshturned earth.

"That wasn't so bad," she said.

"I'm sorry you had to help."

"It's just ... I don't know."

"What is it?"

"Are we sure there isn't a God?"

"It's a pretty far-fetched idea, don't you think?"

"I have the strongest feeling that he's still alive somewhere."

"Where, though? How could that be?"

"It's just a feeling I have."

"He used to be your friend. This is so much harder for you than for me."

"Do you think he was in pain? Was he frightened?"

"Honestly, no. It happened very fast. And now that he's dead he can't remember pain. It's as if he'd never existed."

He wanted her to believe this, but he wasn't sure he believed it himself. If time was infinite, then three seconds and three years represented the same infinitely small fraction of it. And so, if inflicting three years of fear and suffering was wrong, as everyone would agree, then inflicting three seconds of it was no less wrong. He caught a fleeting glimpse of God in the math here, in the infinitesimal duration of a life. No death could be quick enough to excuse inflicting pain. If you were capable of doing the math, it meant that a morality was lurking in it.

"Well," Annagret said in a harder voice. "If there is a God, I guess my friend is on his way to Hell for raping me."

This was the first time she'd used the word "rape." He loved that she wasn't consistent; was possibly even somewhat dishonest. His wish to puzzle her out was as strong as his wish to lie down with her; the two desires almost amounted to the same thing. But time was passing. He jumped into the grave and set about deepening it.

"I'm the one who should be doing that."

"Go in the shed and lie down. Try to sleep."

"I wish we knew each other better."

"Me, too. But you need to try to sleep."

She watched in silence for a long time, half an hour, while he dug. He had a confusing twinned sense of her closeness and complete otherness. Together, they'd killed a man, but she had her own thoughts, her own motives, so close to him and yet so separate. She'd seen immediately how important it was to be together—what a ceaseless torture it would be to remain apart, after what they'd done—while he was seeing it only now. She was just fifteen, but she was quick and he was slow.

Only after she went to lie down did his mind shift back into logistics mode. He dug until three o'clock and then, without pausing, dragged and rolled the body into the hole and jumped down after it to wrestle it into a supine position. He didn't want to have to remember the face, so he sprinkled some dirt over it. Then he turned on the flashlight and inspected the body for jewelry. There was a heavy watch, not inexpensive, and a sleazy gold neck chain. The watch came off easily, but to break the chain he had to plant a hand on the dirt-

covered forehead and yank. Fortunately nothing was real, at least not for long. Infinitesimally soon, the eternity of his own death would commence and render all of this unreal.

In two hours he had the hole refilled and was jumping on the dirt, compacting it. When he returned to the toolshed, the beam of the flashlight found Annagret huddled in a corner, shivering, her arms around her knees. He didn't know which was more unbearable to see, her beauty or her suffering. He turned the light off.

"Did you sleep?"

"Yeah. I woke up freezing."

"I don't suppose you noticed when the first train comes."

"Five-thirty-eight."

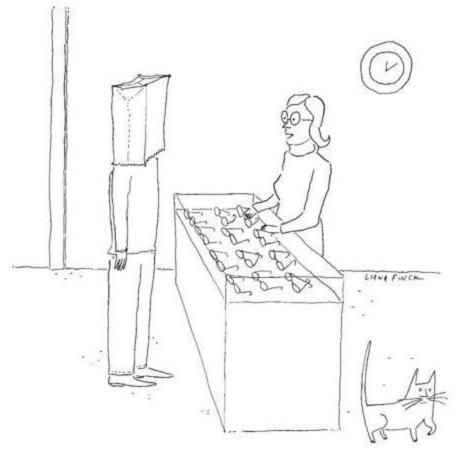
"You're remarkable."

"He was the one who checked the time. It wasn't me."

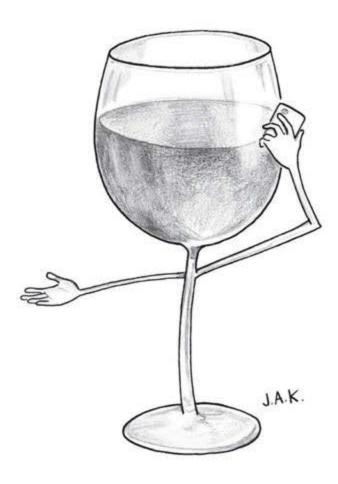
"Do you want to go over your story with me?"

"No, I've been thinking about it. I know what to say."

The mood between the two of them felt cold and chalky now. For the first



"Do you need prescription eye holes?" Or just eye holes?"



"This is the wine talking."

time, it occurred to Andreas that they might have no future together—that they'd done a terrible thing and would henceforth dislike each other for it. Love crushed by crime. Already it seemed like a very long time since she'd run to him and kissed him. Maybe she'd been right; maybe they should have spent one night together and then turned themselves in.

"If nothing happens in a year," he said, "and if you think you're not being watched, it might be safe to see each other again."

"It might as well be a hundred years," she said bitterly.

"I'll be thinking of you the whole time. Every day. Every hour."

He heard her standing up.

"I'm going to the station now," she said.

"Wait twenty minutes. You don't want to be seen standing around there."

"I have to warm up. I'll run somewhere and then go to the station."

"I'm sorry about this."

"Not as sorry as I am."

"Are you angry at me? You can be. Whatever you need to be is fine with me."

"I'm just sick. I feel so sick. They'll ask me one question, and everything will be obvious. I feel too sick to pretend."

"You came home at nine-thirty and he wasn't there. You went to bed because you weren't feeling well...."

"I already said we don't have to go over it."

"I'm sorry."

She moved toward the door, bumped into him, and continued on outside. Somewhere in the darkness, she stopped. "So I guess I'll see you in a hundred years."

"Annagret."

He could hear the earth sucking at her footsteps, see her dark form receding across the back yard. He'd never in his life felt more tired. But finishing his tasks was more bearable than thinking about her. Using the flashlight sparingly, he covered the grave with older and then fresher pine needles, did his best to kick away footprints and wheelbarrow ruts, and artfully strewed leaf litter and lawn waste. His boots and jacket sleeves were hopelessly muddy, but he was too spent to muster anxiety about it. At least he could change his pants.

The mist had given way to a warmer fog that made the arrival of daylight curiously sudden. Fog was not a bad thing. He policed the back yard for footprints and wheelbarrow tracks. Only when the light was nearly full strength did he return to the back steps to remove the trip wire. There was more blood than he'd expected on the steps, less vomit than he'd feared on the bushes by the railing. He was seeing everything now as if through a long tube. He filled and refilled a watering can at the outside spigot, to wash away the blood.

The last thing he did was to check the kitchen for signs of disturbance. All he found was wetness in the sink from the drink he'd taken. It would be dry by evening. He locked the front door behind him and set out walking toward Rahnsdorf. By eight-thirty he was back in the basement of the rectory. Peeling off his jacket, he realized that he still had the dead man's wallet and jewelry, but he could sooner have flown to the moon than dispose of them now; he could barely untie his muddy boots. He lay down on his bed to wait for the police.

They didn't come. Not that day, that week, or that season—they never came at all.

And why didn't they? Among the least plausible of Andreas's hypotheses was that he and Annagret had committed the perfect crime. Certainly it was possible that his parents hadn't noticed what a wreck he'd made of the dacha's back yard; the first heavy snow of the season had come the following week. But that nobody had noticed the unforgettably beautiful girl on either of her train trips? Nobody in her neighborhood had seen her and Horst walking to the station? Nobody had looked into where she'd been going in the weeks before Horst's disappearance? Nobody had questioned her hard enough to break her? The last Andreas had seen of her, a feather would have broken her.

Less implausible was that the Stasi had investigated the mother, and that her addiction and pilferage had come to light. The Stasi would naturally have interested itself in a missing informal collaborator. If the mother was in Stasi detention, the question wasn't whether she'd confess to the murder (or, depending on how the Stasi chose to play it, to the crime of assisting Horst's flight to the West). The only question was how much psychological torture she'd endure before she did.

Or maybe the Stasi's suspicions had centered on the stepdaughter in Leipzig. Or on Horst's co-workers at the power plant, the ones he'd reported on. Maybe one of them was already in prison for the crime. For weeks after the killing, Andreas had looked at the newspapers every day. If the criminal police had been handling the case, they surely would have put a picture of the missing man in the papers. But no picture ever appeared. The only realistic explanation was that the Stasi was keeping the police out of it.

Assuming he was right about this, he had one more hypothesis: the Stasi had easily broken Annagret, she'd led them to the dacha, and they'd discovered who owned it. To avoid public embarrassment of the Under-Secretary, they'd accepted Horst's sexual predation as a mitigating circumstance and contented themselves with scaring the daylights out of Annagret. And to torture Andreas with uncertainty, to make his life a hell of anxiety and hypercaution, they'd left him alone.

He hated this hypothesis, but unfortunately it made more sense than any of the others. He hated it because there was an easy way to test it: find Annagret and ask her. Already scarcely an hour of his waking days passed without his wanting to go to her, and yet, if he was wrong about his hypothesis, and if she was still under suspicion and still being closely watched, it would be disaster for them to meet. Only she could know when they were safe.

He went back to counselling at-risk youths, but there was a new hollowness at his core that never left him. He no longer taught the kids levity. He was at risk himself now—at risk of weeping when he listened to their sad stories. It was as if sadness were a chemical ele-

ment in everything he touched. His mourning was mostly for Annagret but also for his old lighthearted, libidinous self. He would have expected his primary feeling to be a feverish fear of discovery and arrest, but the Republic appeared to be intent on sparing him, for whatever sick reason, and he could no longer remember why he'd laughed at the country and its tastelessness. It now seemed to him more like a Republic of Infinite Sadness. Girls still came to his office door, interested in him, maybe even all the more fascinated by his air of sorrow, but instead of thinking about their pussies he thought about their young souls. Every one of them was an avatar of Annagret; her soul was in all of them.

Meanwhile in Russia there was glasnost; there was Gorby. The true-believing little Republic, feeling betrayed by its Soviet father, cracked down harder on its own dissidents. The police had raided a sister church in Berlin, the Zion Church, and earnestness and self-importance levels were running high on Siegfeldstrasse. There was a wartime mood in the meeting rooms. Secluding himself, as always, in the basement, Andreas found that his sorrow hadn't cured him of his megalomaniacal solipsism. If anything, it was all the stronger. He felt as if his misery had taken over the entire country.

Late in the spring of 1989, his anxiety returned. At first he almost wel-

comed it, as if it were the companion of his AWOL libido, reawakened by warm nights and flowering trees. He found himself drawn to the television in the rectory's common room to watch the evening news, unexpurgated, on ZDF. The embarrassments watching with him were jubilant, predicting regime collapse within twelve months, and it

was precisely the prospect of regime collapse that made him anxious. Part of the anxiety was straightforward criminal worry: he suspected that only the Stasi was keeping the police at bay; that he was safe from prosecution only as long as the regime survived; that the Stasi was (irony of ironies) his only friend. But there was also a larger and more diffuse anxiety, a choking hydrochloric

cloud. As Solidarity was legalized in Poland, as the Baltic states began to break away, as Gorbachev publicly washed his hands of his Eastern Bloc foster children, Andreas felt more and more as if his own death were imminent. Without the Republic to define him, he'd be nothing. His all-important parents would be nothing, be less than nothing, be dismal tainted holdovers from a discredited system, and the only world in which he mattered would come to an end.

It got worse through the summer. He could no longer bear to watch the news, but even when he locked himself in his room he could hear people in the hallway yammering about the latest developments, the mass emigration through Hungary, the demonstrations in Leipzig, the rumors of a coming coup.

On a Tuesday morning in October, after the largest demonstration in Leipzig yet, the young vicar came tapping on his door. The guy ought to have been in giddy spirits, but something was troubling him. Instead of sitting down cross-legged, he paced the room. "I'm sure you heard the news," he said. "A hundred thousand people in the street and no violence."

"Hooray?" Andreas said.

The vicar hesitated. "I need to come clean with you about something," he said. "I should have told you a long time ago—I guess I was a coward. I hope you can forgive me."

Andreas wouldn't have figured the

guy for an informant, but his preamble had that flavor.

"It's not that," the vicar said, reading his thought. "But I did have a visit from the Stasi, about two years ago. Two guys who looked the part. They had some questions about you, and I answered them. They implied that I'd be arrested if you found out they'd been here."

"But now it turns out that their guns are loaded with daisy seeds."

"They said it was a criminal matter, but they didn't say what kind. They showed me a picture of that girl who came here. They wanted to know if you'd spoken to her. I said you might have, because you're the youth counsellor. I didn't say anything definite. But they also wanted to know if I'd seen you on some particular night. I said I

wasn't sure—you spend so much time alone in your room. The whole time we were having this conversation, I'm pretty sure you were down here, but they didn't want to see you. And they never came back."

"That's all?"

"Nothing happened to you, nothing happened to any of us, and so I assumed that everything was O.K. But I felt bad about talking to them and not telling you. I wanted you to know."

"Now that the ice is melting, the bodies are coming to the surface."

The vicar bristled. "I think we've been good to you. It's been a good arrangement. I know I probably should have said something earlier. But the fact is we've always been a little afraid of you."

"I'm grateful. Grateful and sorry for any trouble."

"Is there anything you want to tell me?"

Andreas shook his head, and the vicar left him alone with his anxiety. If the Stasi had come to the church, it meant that Annagret had been questioned, and had talked. This meant that the Stasi had at least some of the facts, maybe all of them. But, with a hundred thousand people assembling unhindered on the streets of Leipzig, the Stasi's days were obviously numbered. Before long, the *VoPos* would take over, the real police would do policework. . . .

He jumped up from his bed and put on a coat. If nothing else, he now knew that he had little to lose by seeing Annagret. Unfortunately, the only place he could think of to look for her was at the Erweiterte Oberschule nearest to her old neighborhood, in Friedrichshain. It seemed inconceivable that she'd proceeded to an EOS, and yet what else would she be doing? He left the church and hurried through the streets, taking some comfort in their enduring drabness, and stationed himself by the school's main entrance. Through the high windows he could see students continuing to receive instruction in Marxist biology and Marxist math. When the last hour ended, he scanned the faces of the students streaming out the doors. He scanned until the stream had dwindled to a trickle. He was disappointed but not really surprised.

For the next week, every afternoon and evening, he loitered outside judo

clubs, at sports centers, at bus stops in Annagret's old neighborhood. By the end of October, he'd given up hope of finding her, but he continued to wander the streets. He trawled the margins of protests, both planned and spontaneous, and listened to ordinary citizens risking imprisonment by demanding fair elections, free travel, the neutering of the Stasi. Honecker was gone, the new government was in crisis, and every day that passed without violence made a Tiananmen-style crackdown seem less likely. Change was coming, and there was nothing he could do but wait to be engulfed by it.

And then, on November 4th, a miracle. Half the city had bravely taken to the streets. He was moving through crowds methodically, scanning faces, smiling at the loudspeakered voice of reason rejecting reunification and calling for reform instead. On Alexanderplatz, toward the ragged rear of the crowd, among the claustrophobes and undecideds, his heart gave a lurch before his brain knew why. There was a girl. A girl with spikily chopped hair and a safetypin earring, a girl who was nonetheless Annagret. Her arm was linked with the arm of a similarly coiffed girl. Both of them blank-faced, aggressively bored. She'd ceased to be the good girl.

"WE MUST FIND OUR OWN WAY. WE MUST LEARN TO TAKE THE BEST FROM OUR IMPERFECT SYSTEM AND THE BEST FROM THE SYSTEM WE OPPOSED."

As if seeking relief from the boringness of the amplified voice, Annagret looked around the crowd and saw Andreas. Her eyes widened. He was smiling uncontrollably. She didn't smile back, but she did put her mouth to the ear of the other girl and break away from her. As she approached him, he could see more clearly how changed her demeanor was, how unlikely it was that she might still love him. She stopped short of embrace range.

"I can only talk for a minute," she said. "We don't have to talk. Just tell me where I can find you."

She shook her head. Her radical haircut and the safety pin in her ear were helpless against her beauty, but her unhappiness wasn't. Her features were the same as two years ago, but the light in her eyes had gone out.

"Trust me," he said. "There's no danger."

"I'm in Leipzig now. We're only up for the day."

"Is that your sister?"

"No, a friend. She wanted to be here."
"I'll come and see you in Leipzig. We can talk."

She shook her head.

"You don't want to see me again," he said.

She looked carefully over one shoulder and then over the other. "I don't even know. I'm not thinking about that. All I know is we're not safe. That's all I can think about."

"Annagret. I know you talked to the Stasi. They came to the church and asked about me. But nothing happened, they didn't question me. We're safe. You did the right thing."

He moved closer. She flinched and edged away from him.

"We're not safe," she said. "They know a lot. They're just waiting."

"If they know so much anyway, it doesn't matter if we're seen together. They're already waited two years. They're not going to do anything to us now."

She looked over her shoulder again. "I should go back."

"I have to see you," he said, for no reason except honesty. "It's killing me not to see you."

She hardly seemed to be listening; was lost in her unhappiness. "They took my mother away," she said. "I had to tell them some kind of story. They put her in a psychiatric hospital for addiction, and then she went to prison."

"I'm sorry."

"But she's been writing letters to the police. She wants to know why they didn't investigate the disappearance. She gets released in February."

"Did you talk to the police yourself?"

"I can't see you," she said, her eyes on the ground. "You did a big thing for me, but I don't think I can ever see you again. I had the most horrible feeling when I saw you. Desire and death and *that thing*. It's all mixed up and horrible. I don't want to want things like that anymore."

"Let me make it go away."

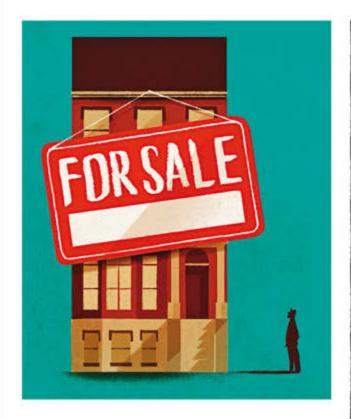
"It will never go away."

"Let me try."

She murmured something he couldn't hear above the noise. Possibly *I don't want to want it*. Then she ran to her friend, and the two of them walked away briskly, without looking back. •

TIME TRAVEL BY SAM LIPSYTE

PACKAGE TOUR



t a recent party, a couple from upstate New York told me about a neighborhood in Brooklyn, how housing there had been affordable in their youth, if only they'd acted. In certain cities, this sentiment is repeated thousands of times a day, to the point that many people have joined the order of real-estate flagellants, staggering around public gatherings and scourging themselves with memories of cheap, decent property spurned. The conversation took a sci-fi turn, and the couple began fantasizing about travelling back in time to buy a now priceless brownstone for what my progenitors used to call a bagel. I pictured the couple hunched in some rattling claptrap wormhole-traverser-because all time machines are built with scrap iron and held fast with duct tape and cutrate rivets, even those designed for hunting down investment lofts. Their lips would be peeled back by g-forces as their ship shredded along the seam of the space-time continuum, until they landed in Cobble Hill, 1974. There they'd hop out, buy a building, and head back.

Would their lives be any different upon return? Would they have scads more cash or just a big sweet pad? Would they have bought up a few more places? Would they have sold it all and retired early to Marin County? What if one of them, while attending an open house on Strong Place, had crushed a butterfly beneath his or her Italian walking shoe? Would they come back to a different world? Would they still be married? Would Mitt Romney be President? Would

"Spider-Man" be the biggest hit in Broadway history? Is this what the dream has become? A land-grab plan?

Time travel should be about more important things, like peeping ancient wonders: pyramids, or hanging gardens, or a colossus plinthed above an Aegean harbor. It's a chance to witness grim prehistory, as some Neanderthal family naïvely ferries Aperol spritzers to the new Cro-Magnon clan next door. I'd love to find out if the Red Sea really did part for Moses, just like in the movie with Charlton Heston. Maybe I'd visit Heston on the set of "Soylent Green," tell him the movie he's shooting won't amount to much but will spawn a fine nerdy catchphrase. I'd also take a moment to set him straight on guns. Because that's another worthy approach to temporal displacement: the do-gooder package tour, the warn-Pompeii-kill-Hitler itinerary. It's a dicey proposition, messing with the past. But wouldn't my intrusions cancel each other out if I brought a teen Hitler to Pompeii just before Vesuvius blew? "I'll leave you here," I'd say. "The new arts academy is just over that ridge!"

Maybe I'd enjoy a little vacation. But to where and to when would I go? Should I get shots? A first-aid kit? Maybe I'd journey to Mayan Mexico, Ming China, Mughal India, Elizabethan England, Clintonian America—which I detested at the time, but look where we are now. (Plus, I could visit the friends of my youth in the form of a dumpy middle-aged wizard and freak them out with my knowledge of their future triumphs and disappointments.) I'd jet off to Sodom for the weekend, maybe Gomorrah, or hit Xanadu and any other International Pleasure Dome Group locations.

For cash infusions, I'd fill my notebook with war and athletic results from down through the centuries and find work as a can't-miss court clairvoyant or dominate the sports-gambling scene. I could also "invent" things, but nothing too mechanical: Monopoly, the Oreo cookie, the mouse pad, the Dutch tulip craze. Of course, it's possible that none of these schemes would work. They all require what time travel might not be able to provide: exquisite timing. It's so easy to beam back into a dangerous moment. Or just a dumb one.

Perhaps my best bet would be a trip back to yesterday. I could pass on that brownie from the tray at the office, reply to those e-mails instead of resending them to myself as reminders to reply. I could tell my kids that I love them, rather than grunting orders and admonitions like "Teeth," "Clomping," "Tone." I could stop doing that thing where I leave one tiny corner of the kitchen counter dirty as an act of rebellion. I could give my wife a real back rub instead of one of those fake jobs designed to be so annoying that she'll ask me to stop. I could, as people like to put it, be more present, more mindful. I could climb into my screeching, shuddering, time-busting jalopy and take the long voyage to right now. I could try again. •

PORTFOLIO BY NICOLA LO CALZO

EXILES

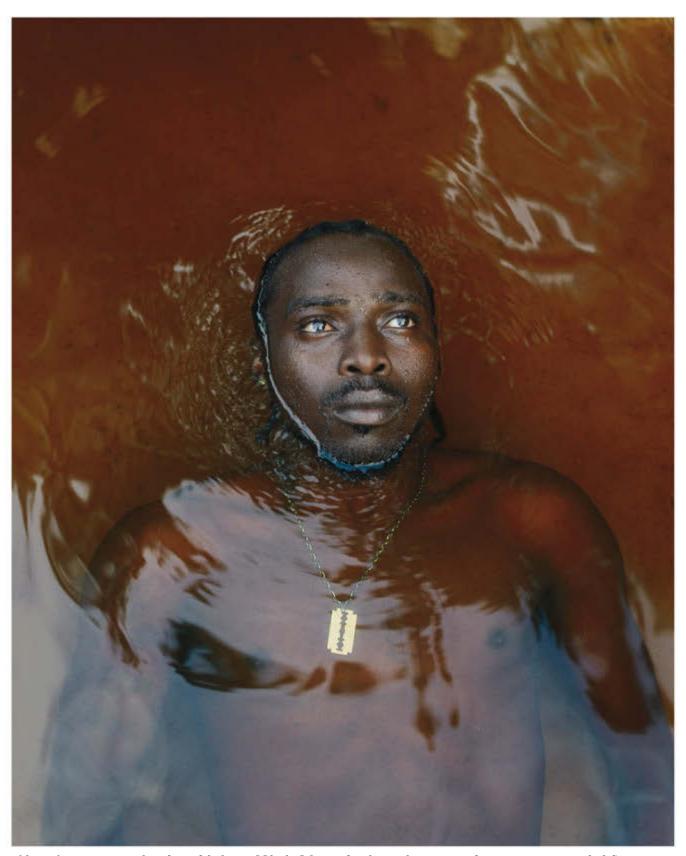
The Maroons of Suriname and French Guiana.

BY HILTON ALS

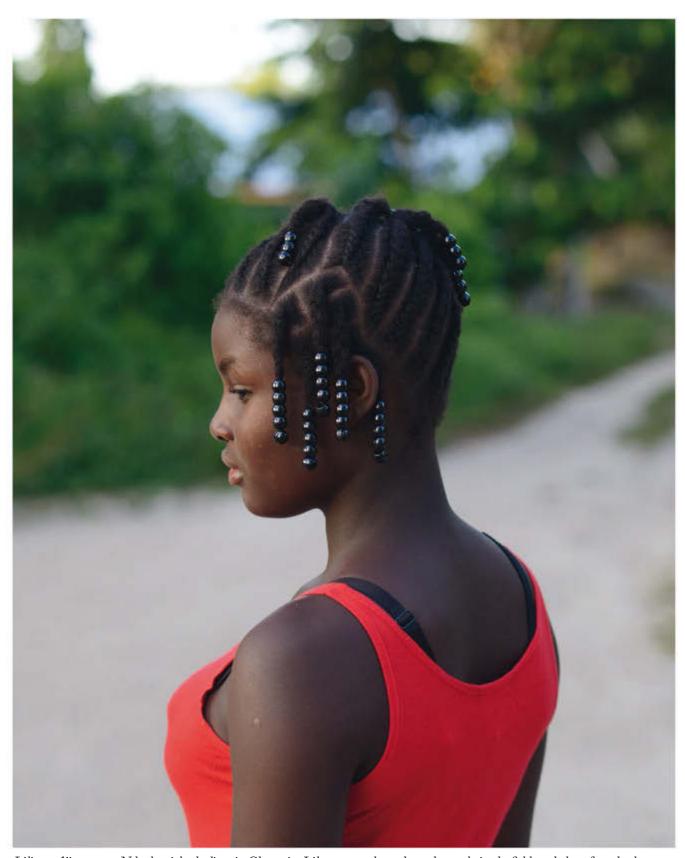
icola Lo Calzo is a thirty-six-year-old Italian artist who now makes his home in Paris. He began his professional life as an architect, but buildings and landscapes proved less interesting—less inspiring—to him than the terrain of the face. In 2008, he began to travel in Africa, where he immersed himself in various societies that opened windows not only onto present-day life in Africa but onto the African diaspora. I first became aware of his work last year, when this magazine's Web site published a portfolio of images that he had produced in the American South. There he recorded (in color) a black-and-white world in which antebellum mores were not so much acted out as displayed; everything had changed, and nothing had changed. For his 2010 project "The Promising Baby," Lo Calzo went to Cameroon, where he photographed albino children, whose skin marked them as different: blacks who were shunned by blacks. In Cameroon, as in some other African countries, he explained in an interview, "to be albino means being condemned to a life of exclusion. Not only from the society but also from the family." The children in the series confront Lo Calzo's lens with indignation and defiance and not a little sadness. Who hasn't witnessed or felt the ridicule and scorn that these children have suffered because of forces beyond their control? That's one of the points that Lo Calzo raises in all his work, or not a point so much as a question: what does it look like to be both part of something and not? How do accidents of birth and history separate people and make them different? Are there links between American blacks and the citizens of, say, Niger? Subjugation, slavery, survival: we see all of these in Lo Calzo's art, and something else, too—an unfetishistic relationship to a race that is not his own. He achieves this, in part, because his images are less about the look of things than about their legacy.

In his most recent project, "Obia" (now showing at the Dominique Fiat Gallery, in Paris), Lo Calzo balances his heart with his historical curiosity. In the eighteenth century, a number of Africans—from the Saamaka, Ndyuka, Aluku, Paamaka, Matawai, and Kwinti peoples—who had been enslaved on plantations in French Guiana and Suriname escaped their forced labor and gathered in groups in the forests between colonial settlements. There these rebels, called Maroons, built their own communities, while periodically fighting off troops sent to reclaim the plantation owners' property. In 1760, Dutch colonists signed the first treaty recognizing their former slaves' will to freedom. Today, Maroons are still living where their ancestors literally cleared paths, but they are economically, and thus socially, marginalized. Yet another legion of black outcasts, many of them lead impoverished, unfocussed lives amid a rich and focussed history. How to survive it?

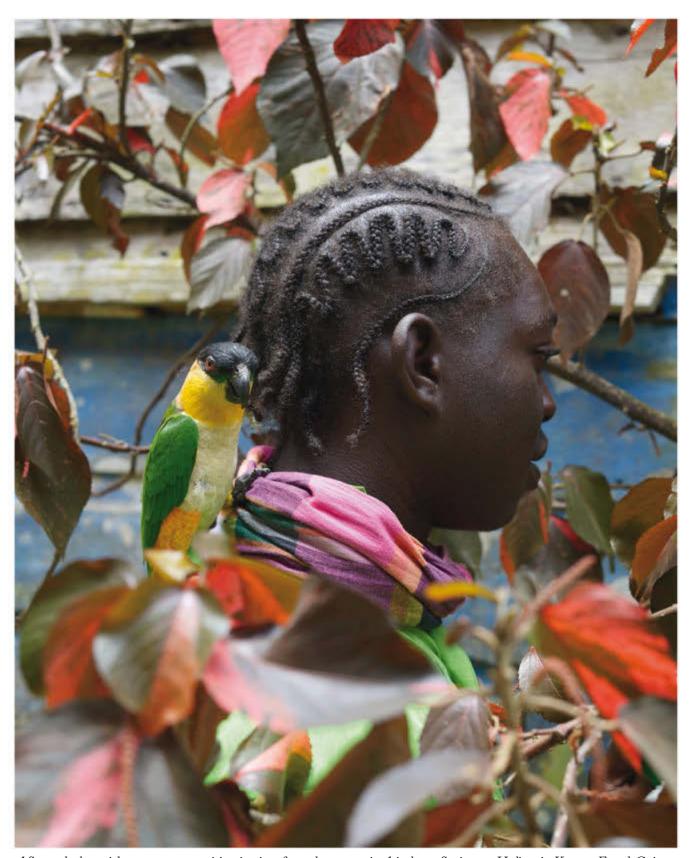
Like his fellow-artists Dawoud Bey and Carrie Mae Weems, Lo Calzo takes as his great subject the meaning that a photographer's eye can draw from the African diaspora, all those disappeared bodies brought back to life by their living and breathing descendants. •



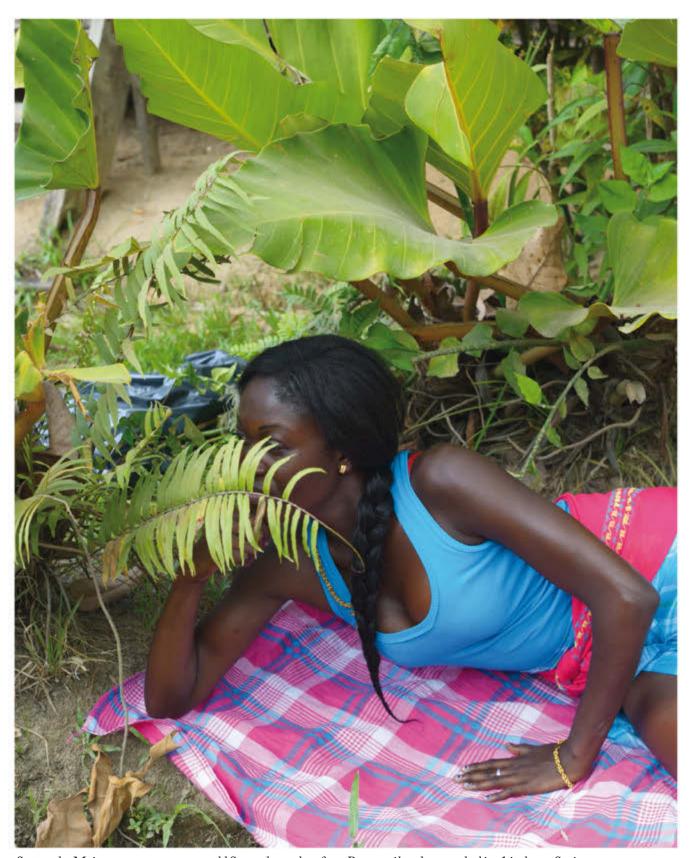
Adrien Ajintoena, a member of one of the largest Ndyuka Maroon families, and a survivor of a 1986 massacre in which Surinamese troops attacked his village, Moiwana, and killed at least thirty-five Maroons. Photographed in Charvein, French Guiana.



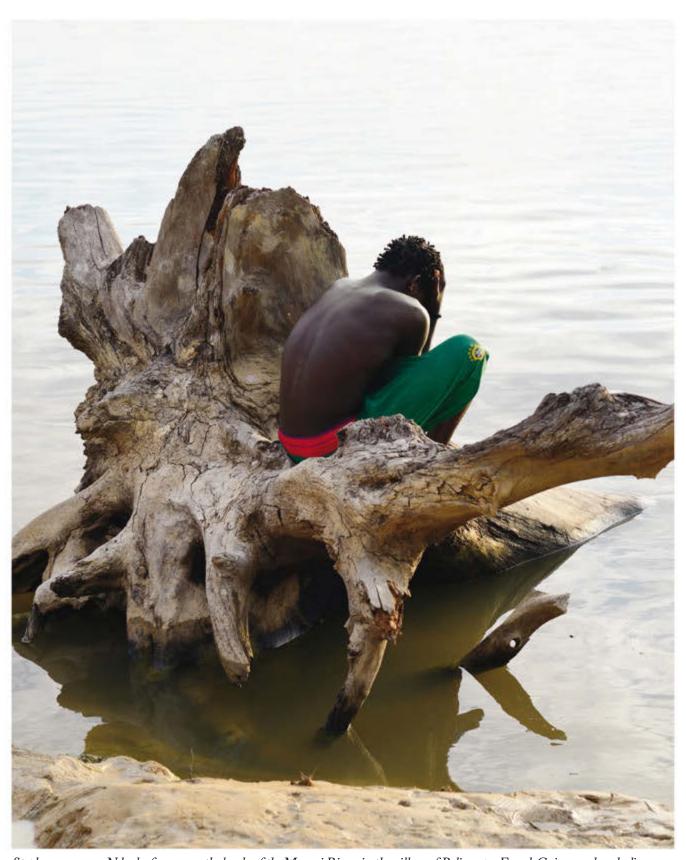
 $Liliana\ Ajintoena,\ a\ Ndyuka\ girl\ who\ lives\ in\ Charve in.\ Like\ most\ students\ there,\ she\ works\ in\ the\ fields\ each\ day\ after\ school.$



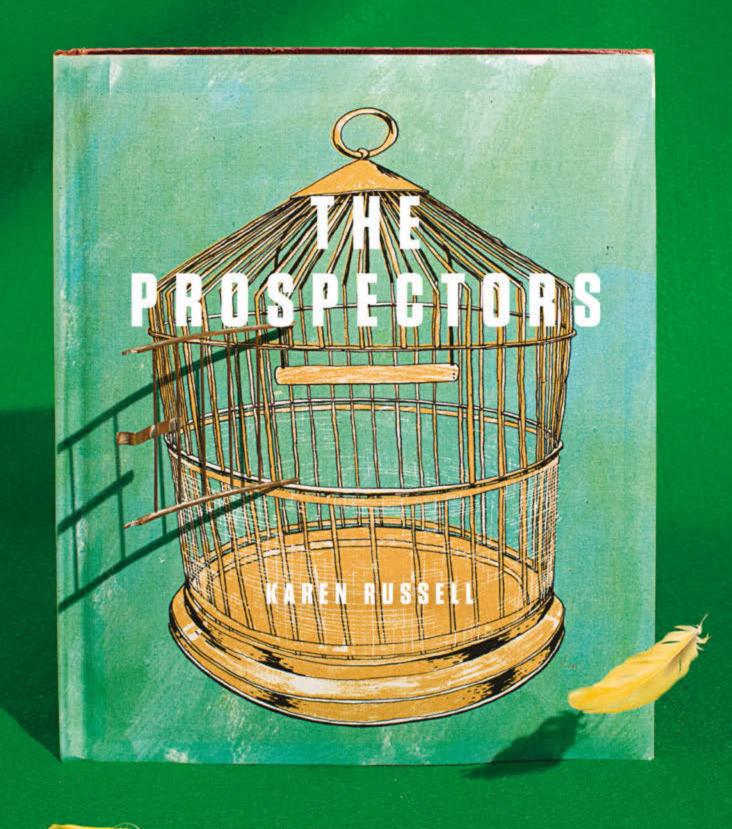
 $A\,Saamaka\,boy\,with\,a\,pet\,parrot,\,participating\,in\,a\,funeral\,ceremony\,in\,Asindoopo,\,Suriname.\,He\,lives\,in\,Kourou,\,French\,Guiana.$



 $Samantha\ Main,\ a\ twenty-two-year-old\ Saamaka\ student\ from\ Paramaribo,\ photographed\ in\ Asindoopo,\ Suriname.$



 $Stephano, a young \ N dyuka \ farmer, on \ the \ banks \ of \ the \ Maroni \ River, in \ the \ village \ of \ Belicampo, French \ Guiana, \ where \ he \ lives.$



he entire ride would take eleven minutes. That was what the boy had promised us, the boy who never showed.

To be honest, I hadn't expected to find the chairlift. Not through the maze of old-growth firs and not in the dwindling light. Not without our escort. A minute earlier, I'd been on the brink of suggesting that we give up and hike back to the logging road. But at the peak of our despondency we saw it: the lift, rising like a mirage out of the timber woods, its four dark cables striping the red sunset. Chairs were floating up the mountainside, forty feet above our heads. Empty chairs, upholstered in ice, swaying lightly in the wind. Sailing beside them, just as swiftly and serenely, a hundred chairs came down the mountain. As if a mirror were malfunctioning, each chair separating from a bucklebright double. Nobody was manning the loading station; if we wanted to take the lift we'd have to do it alone. I squeezed Clara's hand.

A party awaited us at the peak. Or so we'd been told by Mr. No-Show, Mr. Nowhere, a French boy named Eugene de La Rochefoucauld.

"I bet his real name is Burt," Clara said angrily. We had never been stood up before. "I bet he's actually from Tennessee."

Well, he had certainly seemed European, when we met him coming down the mountain road on horseback, one week ago this night. He'd had that hat! Such a convincingly stupid goatee! He'd pronounced his name as if he were coughing up a jewel. Eugene de La Rochefoucauld had proffered a nasally invitation: would we be his guests next Saturday night, at the gala opening of the Evergreen Lodge? We'd ride the new chairlift with him to the top of the mountain, and be among the first visitors to the marvellous new ski resort. The President himself might be in attendance.

Clara, unintimidated, had flirted back. "Two dates—is that not being a little greedy, Eugene?"

"No less would be acceptable," he'd said, smiling, "for a man of my stature." (Eugene was five feet four; we'd assumed he meant education, wealth.) The party was to be held seven thousand feet above Lucerne, Oregon, the

mountain town where we had marooned ourselves, at nineteen and twenty-two; still pretty (Clara was beautiful), still young enough to attract notice, but penniless, living week to week in a "historic" boarding house. "Historic" had turned out to be the landlady's synonym for "haunted." "Turn-of-thecentury sash windows," we'd discovered, meant "pneumonia holes."

We'd waited for Eugene for close to an hour, while Time went slinking around the forest, slyly rearranging its shadows; now a red glow clung to the huge branches of the Douglas firs. When I finally spoke, the bony snap in my voice startled us both.

"We don't need him, Clara."
"We don't?"

"No. We can get there on our own." Clara turned to me with blue lips and flakes daggering her lashes. I felt a pang: I could see both that she was afraid of my proposal and that she could be persuaded. This is a terrible knowledge to possess about a friend. Nervously, I counted my silver and gold bracelets, meting out reasons for making the journey. If we did not make the trip, I would have to pawn them. I argued that it was riskier *not* to take this risk. (For me, at least; Clara had her wealthy parents waiting back in Florida. As much as we dared together, we never risked our friendship by bringing up that gulf.) I touched the fake red flower pinned to my black bun. What had we gone to all this effort for? We owed our landlady twelve dollars for January's rent. Did Clara prefer to wait in the drifts for our prince, that fake frog, Eugene, to arrive?

For months, all anybody in Lucerne had been able to talk about was this lodge, the centerpiece of a new ski resort on Mt. Joy. Another New Deal miracle. In his Fireside Chats, Roosevelt had promised us that these construction projects would lift us out of the Depression. Sometimes I caught myself squinting hungrily at the peak, as if the government money might be visible, falling from the actual clouds. Out-of-work artisans had flocked to northern Oregon: carpenters, masons, weavers, engineers. The Evergreen Lodge, we'd heard, had original stonework, carved from five thousand pounds of native granite. Its doors were cathedral huge, made of hand-cut ponderosa pine. Murals had been commissioned from local artists: scenes of mountain wildflowers, rearing bears. Quilts covered the beds, hand-crocheted by the New Deal men. I loved to picture their callused black thumbs on the bridally white muslin. Architecturally, what was said to stun every visitor was the main hall: a huge hexagonal chamber, with a band platform and "acres for dancing, at the top of the world!"

W.P.A. workers cut trails into the side of Mt. Joy, assisted by the Civilian Conservation Corps boys from Camp Thistle and Camp Bountiful. I'd seen these young men around town, on leave from the woods, in their mudcaked boots and khaki shirts with the government logo. Their greasy faces clumped together like olives in a jar. They were the young mechanics who had wrenched the lift out of a snowy void and into skeletal, functioning existence. To raise bodies from the base of the mountain to the summit in eleven minutes! It sounded like one of Jules Verne's visions.

"See that platform?" I said to Clara. "Stand there, and fall back into the next chair. I'll be right behind you."

At first, the climb was beautiful. An evergreen army held its position in the whipping winds. Soon, the woods were replaced by fields of white. Icy outcroppings rose like fangs out of a pinkrimmed sky. We rose, too, our voices swallowed by the cables' groaning. Clara was singing something that I strained to hear, and failed to comprehend.

Ilara and I called ourselves the Prospectors. Our fathers, two very different kinds of gambler, had been obsessed with the Gold Rush, and we grew up hearing stories about Yukon fever and the Klondike stampeders. We knew the legend of the farmer who had panned out a hundred and thirty thousand dollars, the clerk who dug up eighty-five thousand, the blacksmith who discovered a haul of the magic metal on Rabbit Creek and made himself a hundred grand richer in a single hour. This period of American history held a special appeal for Clara's father, Mr. Finisterre, a bony-faced Portuguese immigrant to southwestern Florida who had wrung his modest

fortune out of the sea-damp wallets of tourists. My own father had killed himself outside the dog track in the spring of 1931, and I'd been fortunate to find a job as a maid at the Hotel Finisterre.

Clara Finisterre was the only other maid on staff—a summer job. Her parents were strict and oblivious people. Their thousand rules went unenforced. They were very busy with their guests. A sea serpent, it was rumored, haunted the coastline beside the hotel, and ninety per cent of our tourism was serpent-driven. Amateur teratologists in Panama hats read the newspaper on the veranda, drinking orange juice and idly scanning the horizon for fins.

"Thank you," Mr. Finisterre whispered to me once, too sozzled to remember my name, "for keeping the secret that there is no secret." The black Atlantic rippled emptily in his eyeglasses.

Every night, Mrs. Finisterre hosted a cocktail hour: cubing green and orange melon, cranking songs out of the ivory gramophone, pouring bright malice into the fruit punch in the form of a mentally deranging Portuguese rum. She'd apprenticed her three beautiful daughters in the Light Arts, the Party Arts. Clara was her eldest. Together, the Finisterre women smoothed arguments and linens. They concocted banter, gab, palaver, patter—every sugary variety of small talk that dissolves into the night.

I hated the cocktail hour, and, whenever I could, I escaped to beat rugs and sweep leaves on the hotel roof. One Monday, however, I heard footsteps ringing on the ladder. It was Clara. She saw me and froze.

Bruises were thickening all over her arms. They were that brilliant pansyblue, the beautiful color that belies its origins. Automatically, I crossed the roof to her. We clacked skeletons; to call it an "embrace" would misrepresent the violence of our first collision. To soothe her, I heard myself making stupid jokes, babbling inanities about the weather, asking in my vague and meandering way what could be done to help her; I could not bring myself to say, plainly, Who did this to you? Choking on my only real question, I offered her my cardigan—the way you'd hand a sick person a tissue. She put it on. She buttoned all the buttons. You couldn't tell that anything was wrong now. This amazed me, that a covering so thin could erase her bruises. I'd half-expected them to bore holes through the wool.

"Don't worry, O.K.?" she said. "I promise, it's nothing."

"I won't tell," I blurted out—although of course I had nothing to tell beyond what I'd glimpsed. Night fell, and I was shivering now, so Clara held me. Something subtle and real shifted inside our embrace—nothing detect—

able to an observer, but a change I registered in my bones. For the duration of our friendship, we'd trade off roles like this: anchor and boat, beholder and beheld. We must have looked like some Janus-faced statue, our chins pointing east and west. An unembarrassed silence seemed to be on loan to us from the distant future, where we were already friends. Then I heard her say, staring over my shoulder at the darkening sea: "What would you be, Aubby, if you lived somewhere else?"

"I'd be a prospector," I told her, without batting an eye. "I'd be a prospector of the prospectors. I'd wait for luck to strike them, and then I'd take their gold."

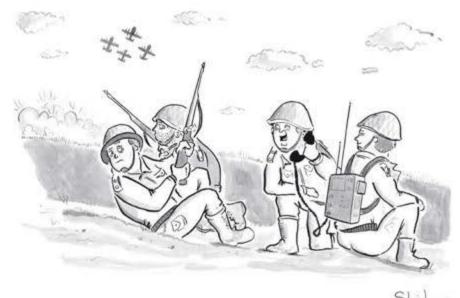
Clara laughed and I joined in, amazed—until this moment, I hadn't considered that my days at the hotel might be eclipsing other sorts of lives. Clara Finisterre was someone whom I thought of as having a fate to escape, but I wouldn't have dignified my own prospects that way, by calling them "a fate."

A week later, Clara took me to a débutante ball at a tacky mansion that looked rabid to me, frothy with white marble balconies. She introduced me as "my best friend, Aubergine." Thus began our secret life. We sifted through the closets and the jewelry boxes of our hosts. Clara tutored me in the social graces, and I taught Clara what to take, and how to get away with it.

One night, Clara came to find me on the roof. She was blinking muddily out of two black eyes. Who was doing this—Mr. Finisterre? Someone from the hotel? She refused to say. I made a deal with Clara: she never had to tell me who, but we had to leave Florida.

The next day, we found ourselves at the train station, with all our clothes and savings.

Those first weeks alone were an education. The West was very poor at that moment, owing to the Depression. But it was still home to many aspiring and expiring millionaires, and we made it our job to make their acquaintance. One aging oil speculator paid for our meals and our transit and required only that we absorb his memories; Clara nicknamed him the "allegedly legendary wit." He had three



"Good news. We're the hundredth caller."







"This may be bliss for you, Felicia, but my pants are crawling with chiggers!"

genres of tale: business victories; sporting adventures that ended in the death of mammals; and eulogies for his former virility.

We met mining captains and fishing captains, whose whiskers quivered like those of orphaned seals. The freckled heirs to timber fortunes. Glazy baronial types, with portentous and misguided names: Romulus and Creon, who were pleased to invite us to gala dinners, and to use us as their gloating mirrors. In exchange for this service, Clara and I helped ourselves to many fine items from their houses. Clara had a magic satchel that seemed to expand with our greed, and we stole everything it could swallow. Dessert spoons, candlesticks, a poodle's jewelled collar. We strode out of parties wearing our hostess's two-toned heels, woozy with adrenaline. Crutched along by Clara's sturdy charm, I was swung through doors that led to marmoreal courtyards and curtained salons and, in many cases, master bedrooms, where my skin glowed under the warm reefs of artificial lighting.

But winter hit, and our mining prospects dimmed considerably. The Ore-

gon coastline was laced with ghost towns; two paper mills had closed, and whole counties had gone bankrupt. Men were flocking inland to the mountains, where the rumor was that the W.P.A. had work for construction teams. I told Clara that we needed to follow them. So we thumbed a ride with a group of work-starved Astoria teenagers who had heard about the Evergreen Lodge. Gold dust had drawn the first prospectors to these mountains; those boys were after the weekly threedollar salary. But if government money was snowing onto Mt. Joy, it had yet to reach the town below. I'd made a bad miscalculation, suggesting Lucerne. Our first night in town, Clara and I stared at our faces superimposed over the dark storefront windows. In the boarding house, we lay awake in the dark, pretending to believe in each other's theatrical sleep; only our bellies were honest, growling at each other. Why did you bring us here? Clara never dreamed of asking me. With her generous amnesia, she seemed already to have forgotten that leaving home had been my idea.

Day after day, I told Clara not to

worry: "We just need one good night." We kept lying to each other, pretending that our hunger was part of the game. Social graces get you meagre results in a shuttered town. We started haunting the bars around the C.C.C. camps. The gaunt men there had next to nothing, and I felt a pang lifting anything from them. Back in the boarding house, our fingers spidering through wallets, we barely spoke to each other. Clara and I began to disappear into adjacent rooms with strangers. She was better off before, my mind whispered. For the first time since we'd left Florida, it occurred to me that our expedition might fail.

he chairlift ascended seven thousand two hundred and fifty feet—I remembered this figure from the newspapers. It had meant very little to me in the abstract. But now I felt our height in the soles of my feet. For whole minutes, we lost sight of the mountain in an onrush of mist. Finally, hands were waiting to catch us. They shot out of the darkness, gripping me under the arms, swinging me free of the lift. Our empty chairs were whipped around by the huge bull wheel before starting t he long flight downhill. Hands, wonderfully warm hands, were supporting my back.

"Eugene?" I called, my lips numb. "Who's You-Jean?" a strange voice chuckled.

The man who was not Eugene turned out to be an ursine mountaineer. With his lantern held high, he peered into our faces. I recognized the drab green C.C.C. uniform. He looked about our age to me, although his face kept blurring in the snow. The lantern, battery powered, turned us all jaundiced shades of gold. He had no clue, he said, about any *Eugene*. But he'd been stationed here to escort guests to the lodge.

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw tears freezing onto Clara's cheeks. Already she was fluffing her hair, asking this government employee how he'd gotten the enviable job of escorting beautiful women across the snows. How quickly she was able to snap back into character! I could barely move my frozen tongue, and I trudged along behind them.

"How old are you girls?" the C.C.C. man asked, and "Where are you from?," and every lie that we told him made me feel safer in his company.

The lodge was a true palace. Its shadow alone seemed to cover fifty acres of snow. Electricity raised a yellowish aura around it, so that the resort loomed like a bubble pitched against the mountain sky. Its A-frame reared out of the woods with the insensate authority of any redwood tree. Lights blazed in every window. As we drew closer, we saw faces peering down at us from several of these.

The terror was still with us. The speed of the ascent. My blood felt carbonated. Six feet ahead of us, Not-Eugene, whose name we'd failed to catch, swung the battery-powered lamp above his head and guided us through a whale-gray tunnel made of ice. "Quite the runway to a party, eh?"

Two enormous polished doors blew inward, and we found ourselves in a rustic ballroom, with fireplaces in each corner shooting heat at us. Amethyst chandeliers sent lakes of light rippling across the dance floor; the stone chimneys looked like indoor caves. Over the bar, a mounted boar grinned tuskily down at us. Men mobbed us, handing us fizzing drinks, taking our coats. Deluged by introductions, we started giggling, handing our hands around: "Nilson, Pauley, Villanueva, Obadiah, Acker..."Proudly, each identified himself to us as one of the C.C.C. "tree soldiers" who had built this fantasy resort: masons and blacksmiths and painters and foresters. They were boys, I couldn't help but think, boys our age. More faces rose out of the shadows, beaming hard. I guessed that, like us, they'd been waiting for this night to come for some time. Someone lit two cigarettes, passed them our way.

I shivered now with expectation. Clara threaded her hand through mine and squeezed down hard—time to dive into the sea. We'd plunged into stranger waters, socially. How many nights had we spent together, listening to tourists speak in tongues, relieved of their senses by Mrs. Finisterre's rum punch? Most of the boys were already drunk—I could smell that. Some rocked on their heels, desperate to start dancing.

They led us toward the bar. Feeling

came flooding back into my skin, and I kept laughing at everything these young men were saying, elated to be indoors with them. Clara had to pinch me through the puffed sleeve of my dress:

"Aubby? Are we the only girls here?"
Clara was right: where were the socialites we'd expected to see? The Oregon state forester, with his sullen redlipped wife? The governor, the bank presidents? The ski experts from the Swiss Alps? Fifty-two paying guests, selected by lottery, had rooms waiting for them—we'd seen the list of names in Sunday's Oregon *Gazette*.

I turned to a man with wise amber eyes. He had unlined skin and a wispy blond mustache, but he smiled at us with the mellow despair of an old goat.

"Excuse me, sir. When does the celebration start?"

Clara flanked him on the left, smiling just as politely.

"Are we the first guests to arrive?"
But now the goat's eyes flamed:
"Whadda you talkin' about? This party
is *under way*, lady. You got twenty-six
dancing partners to choose from out
there—that ain't enough?"

The strength of his fury surprised us; backing up, I bumped my hip against a bannister. My hand closed on what turned out to be a tiny beaver, a carved ornament. Each cedar newel post had one.

"The woodwork is beautiful."

He grinned, soothed by the compliment.

"My supervisor is none other than O. B. Dawson."

"And your name?"

The thought appeared unbidden: *Later*, *you'll want to know what to scream*.

"Mickey Loatch. Got a wife, girls, I'm chagrined to say. Got three kids already, back in Osprey. I'm here so

they can eat." Casually, he explained to us the intensity of his loneliness, the loneliness of the entire corps. They'd been driven by truck, eight miles each day, from Camp Thistle to the deep woods. For months at a time, they lived away from their families. Drinking water came from Lister bags; the latrines were saddle trenches. Everyone was glad, glad, glad, he said, to have

the work. "There wasn't anything for us, until the Emerald Lodge project came along."

Mr. Loatch, I'd been noticing, had the strangest eyes I'd ever seen. They were a brilliant dark yellow, the color of that magic metal, gold.

Swallowing, I asked the man, "Excuse me, but I'm a bit confused. Isn't this the *Evergreen* Lodge?"

"The Evergreen Lodge?" the man said, exposing a mouthful of chewed pink sausage. "Where's dat, gurrls?" He laughed at his own cartoony voice.

A suspicion was coming into focus, a dreadful theory; I tried to talk it away, but the harder I looked, the keener it became. A quick scan of the room confirmed what I must have registered and ignored when I first walked through those doors. Were all of the boys' eyes this same hue? Trying to stay calm, I gripped Clara's hand and spun her around like a weathervane: gold, gold, gold, gold, gold,

"Oh my God, Clara."

"Aubby? What's wrong with you?"
"Clara," I murmured, "I think we
may have taken the wrong lift."

Two lodges existed on Mt. Joy. There was the Evergreen Lodge, which would be unveiled tonight, in a ceremony of extraordinary opulence, attended by the state forester and the President. Where Eugene was likely standing, on the balcony level, raising

a flute for the champagne toast. There had once been, however, on the southeastern side of this same mountain, a second structure. This place lived on in local memory as demolished hope, as unconsummated blueprint. It was the failed original, crushed by an avalanche two years earlier, the graveyard of twenty-six workers from

Company 609 of the Oregon Civilian Conservation Corps.

"Unwittingly," our landlady, who loved a bloody and unjust story, had told us over a pancake breakfast, "those workers were building their own casket." With tobogganing runs and a movie theatre, and more windows than Versailles, it was to have been even more impressive than the Evergreen

Lodge. But the unfinished lodge had been completely covered in the collapse.

Mickey Loatch was still steering us around, showing off the stonework.

"Have you gals been to the Cloud Cap Inn? That's hitched to the mountain with wire cables. See, what we done is—"

"Mr. Loatch?" Swilling a drink, I steadied my voice. "How late does the chairlift run?"

"Oh dear." He pursed his lips. "You girls gotta be somewhere? I'm afraid you're stuck with us, at least until morning. You're the last we let up. They shut that lift down until dawn."

Next to me, I heard Clara in my ear: "Are you crazy? We just got here, and you're talking about leaving? Do you know how rude you sound?"

"They're dead."

"What are you talking about? Who's dead?"

"Everyone. Everyone but us."

Clara turned from me, her jaw tensing. At a nearby table, five green-clad boys were watching our conversation play out with detached interest, as if it were a sport they rarely followed. Clara wet her lips and smiled down at them, drumming her red nails on their table's glossy surface.

"This is so beautiful!" she cooed. All five of the dead boys blushed. "Excuse us," she fluttered. "Is there a powder room? My friend here is just a mess!"

The Ladies Room" read a bronzed sign posted on an otherwise undistinguished door. At other parties, this room had always been our sanctuary. Once the door was shut, we stared at each other in the mirror, transferring knowledge across the glass. Her eyes were still brown, I noted with relief, and mine were blue. I worried that I might start screaming, but I bit back my panic, and I watched Clara do the same for me. "Your nose," I finally murmured. Blood poured in bright bars down her upper lip.

"I guess we must be really high up," she said, and started to cry.

"Shh, shh, shh ..."

I wiped at the blood with a tissue. "See?" I showed it to her. "At least we *are*, ah, at least we can still..."

Clara sneezed violently, and we

stared at the reddish globules on the glass, which stood out with terrifying lucidity against the flat, unreal world of the mirror.

"What are we going to do, Aubby?" I shook my head; a horror flooded through me until I could barely breathe.

Ordinarily, I would have handled the logistics of our escape—picked locks, counterfeited tickets. Clara would have corrected my lipstick and my posture, encouraging me to look more like a willowy seductress and less like a baseball umpire. But tonight it was Clara who formulated the plan. We had to tiptoe around the Emerald Lodge. We had to dim our own lights. And, most critical to our survival here, according to Clara: We had to persuade our dead hosts that we believed they were alive.

At first, I objected; I thought these workers deserved to know the truth about themselves.

"Oh?" Clara said. "How principled of you."

And what did I think was going to happen, she asked, if we told the men what we knew?

"I don't know. They'll let us go?" Clara shook her head.

"Think about it, Aubby—what's keeping this place together?"

We had to be very cautious, very amenable, she argued. We couldn't challenge our hosts on any of their convictions. The Emerald Lodge was a real place, and they were breathing safely inside it. We had to admire their handiwork, she said. Continue to exclaim over the lintel arches and the wroughtiron grates, the beams and posts. As if they were real, as if they were solid. Clara begged me to do this. Who knew what might happen if we roused them from their dreaming? The C.C.C. workers' ghosts had built this place, Clara said; we were at their mercy. If the men discovered they were dead, we'd die with them. We needed to believe in their rooms until dawn—just long enough to escape them.

"Same plan as ever," Clara said. "How many hundreds of nights have we staked a claim at a party like this?"

Zero, I told her. On no occasion had we been the only living people.

"We'll charm them. We'll drink a little, dance a little. And then, come dawn, we'll escape down the mountain."

Somebody started pounding on the door: "Hey! What's the holdup, huh? Somebody fall in? You girls wanna dance or what?"

"Almost ready!" Clara shouted brightly.

On the dance floor, the amber-eyed ghosts were as awkward and as touching, as unconvincingly brash as any boys in history on the threshold of a party. Innocent hopefuls with their hats pressed to their chests.

"I feel sorry for them, Clara! They have no idea."

"Yes. It's terribly sad."

Her face hardened into a stony expression I'd seen on her only a handful of times in our career as prospectors.

"When we get back down the mountain, we can feel sad," she said. "Right now, we are going to laugh at all their jokes. We are going to celebrate this stupendous American landmark, the Emerald Lodge."

Clara's mother owned an etiquette book for women, the first chapter of which advises, *Make Your Date Feel Like He Is the Life of the Party!* People often mistake laughing girls for foolish creatures. They mistake our merriment for nerves or weakness, or the hysterical looning of desire. Sometimes, it is that. But not tonight. We could hold our wardens hostage, too, in this careful way. Everybody needs an audience.

At other parties, our hosts had always been very willing to believe us when we feigned interest in their endless rehearsals of the past. They used our black pupils to polish up their antique triumphs. Even an ogreish salmon-boat captain, a bachelor again at eighty-seven, was convinced that we were both in love with him. Nobody ever invited Clara and me to a gala to hear our honest opinions.

At the bar, a calliope of tiny glasses was waiting for me: honey and cherry and lemon. Flavored liquors, imported from Italy, the bartender smiled shyly. "Delicious!" I exclaimed, touching each to my lips. Clara, meanwhile, had been swept onto the dance floor. With her mauve lipstick in place and her glossy hair smoothed, she was shooting colors all around the room. Could you scare a dead boy with the vibrancy of

your life? "Be careful," I mouthed, motioning her into the shadows. Boys in green beanies kept sidling up to her, vying for her attention. It hurt my heart to see them trying. Of course, news of their own death had not reached them—how could that news get up the mountain, to where the workers were buried under snow?

Perched on the barstool, I plaited my hair. I tried to think up some good jokes.

"Hullo. Care if I join you?"

This dead boy introduced himself as Lee Covey. Black bangs flopped onto his brow. He had the small, recessed, comically despondent face of a pug dog. I liked him immediately. And he was so funny that I did not have to theatricalize my laughter. Lee's voluble eyes made conversation feel almost unnecessary; his conviction that he was alive was contagious.

"I'm not much of a dancer," Lee apologized abruptly. As if to prove his point, he sent a glass crashing off the bar.

"Oh, that's O.K. I'm not, either. See my friend out there?" I asked. "In the green dress? She's the graceful one."

But Lee kept his golden eyes fixed on me, and soon it became difficult to say who was the mesmerist and who was succumbing to hypnosis. His Camp Thistle stories made me laugh so hard that I worried about falling off the barstool. Lee had a rippling laugh, like summer thunder; by this point I was very drunk. Lee started in on his family's sorry history: "Daddy the Dwindler, he spent it all, he lost everything we had, he turned me out of the house. It fell to me to support the family..."

I nodded, recognizing his story's contours. How had the other workers washed up here? I wondered. Did they remember their childhoods, their lives before the avalanche? Or had those memories been buried inside them?

It was the loneliest feeling, to watch the group of dead boys dancing. Coupled off, they held on to each other's shoulders. "For practice," Lee explained. They steered each other uncertainly around the hexagonal floor, swaying on currents of song.

"Say, how about it?" Lee said suddenly. "Let's give it a whirl—you only live once."



"What makes him the bad cop is that he's in the wrong interrogation room and he just gave you my doughnut."

Seconds later, we were on the floor, jitterbugging in the center of the hall.

"Oh, oh, oh," he crooned.

When Lee and I kissed, it felt no different from kissing a living mouth. We sank into the rhythms of horns and strings and harmonicas, performed by a live band of five dead mountain brothers. With the naïve joy of all these ghosts, they tootled their glittery instruments at us.

A hand grabbed my shoulder. "May I cut in?"

Clara dragged me off the floor.

Back in the powder room, Clara's eyes looked shiny, raccoon-beady. She was exhausted, I realized. Some grins are only reflexes, but others are courageous acts—Clara's was the latter. The clock had just chimed tenthirty. The party showed no signs of slowing. At least the clock is moving, I pointed out. We tried to conjure a picture of the risen sun, piercing the thousand windows of the Emerald Lodge.

"You doing O.K.?"

"I have certainly been better."

"We're going to make it down the mountain."

"Of course we are."

Near the western staircase, Lee waited with a drink in hand. Shadows pooled unnaturally around his feet; they reminded me of peeling paint. If you stared too long, they seemed to curl slightly up from the floorboards.

"Jean! There you are!"

At the sound of my real name, I felt electrified—hadn't I introduced myself by a pseudonym? Clara and I had a telephone book of false names. It was how we dressed for parties. We chose alter egos for each other, like jewelry.

"It's Candy, actually." I smiled politely. "Short for Candace."

"Whatever you say, *Jean*," Lee said, playing lightly with my bracelet.

"Who told you that? Did my friend tell you that?"

"You did."

I blinked slowly at Lee, watching

his grinning face come in and out of focus.

I'd had plenty more to drink, and I realized that I didn't remember half the things we'd talked about. What else, I wondered, had I let slip?

"How did you get that name, huh? It's a really pretty name, Jeannie."

I was unused to being asked personal questions. Lee put his arms around me, and then, unbelievably, I heard my voice in the darkness, telling the ghost a true story.

Jean, I told him, is what I prefer to go by. In Florida, most everybody called me Aubby.

My parents named me Aubergine. They wanted me to have a glamorous name. It was a luxury they could afford to give me, a spell of protection. "Aubergine" was a word that my father had learned during his wartime ser-

vice, the French word for "dawn," he said. A name like that, they felt, would envelop me in an aura of mystery, from swaddling to shroud. One night, on a rare trip to a restaurant, we learned the truth from a fellow-diner, a bald, genteel eavesdropper.

"Aubergine," he said thoughtfully. "What an *interesting* name."

We beamed at him eagerly, my whole family.

"It is, of course, the French word for 'eggplant."

"Oh, darn!" my mother said, unable to contain her sorrow.

"Of course!" roared old dad.

But we were a family long accustomed to reversals of fortune; in fact, my father had gone bankrupt misapprehending various facts about the dog track and his own competencies.

"It suits you," the bald diner said,

"Would you please refrain from texting while I'm operating!"

smiling and turning the pages of his newspaper. "You are a little fat, yes? Like an eggplant!"

"We call her Jean for short," my mother had smoothly replied.

Ilara was always teasing me. "Don't fall in love with anybody," she'd say, and then we'd laugh for longer than the joke really warranted, because this scenario struck us both as so unlikely. But as I leaned against this ghost I felt my life falling into place. It was the spotlight of his eyes, those radiant beams, that gently drew motes from the past out of me-and I loved this. He had got me talking, and now I didn't want to shut up. His eyes grew wider and wider, golden nets woven with golden fibers. I told him about my father's suicide, my mother's death. At the last second, I bit my tongue, but I'd been on the verge of telling him about Clara's bruises, those mute blue coördinates. Not to solicit Lee's help—what could this phantom do? No, merely to keep him looking at me.

Hush, Aubby, I heard in Clara's tiny, moth-fluttery voice, which was immediately incinerated by the hot pleasure of Lee's gaze.

We kissed a second time. I felt our teeth click together; two warm hands cupped my cheeks. But when he lifted his face, his anguish leapt out at me. His wild eyes were like bees trapped on the wrong side of a window, bouncing along the glass. "You..." he began. He stroked at my cheek. "You feel..." Very delicately, he tried kissing me again. "You taste..." Some bewildered comment trailed off into silence. One hand smoothed over my dress, while the other rose to claw at his pale throat.

"How's that?" he whispered hoarsely in my ear. "Does that feel all right?"

Lee was so much in the dark. I had no idea how to help him. I wondered how honest I would have wanted Lee to be with me, if he were in my shoes. *Put him out of his misery*, country people say of sick dogs. But Lee looked very happy. Excited, even, about the future.

"Should we go upstairs, Jean?"

"But where did Clara go?" I kept murmuring.

It took great effort to remember her name.

"Did she disappear on you?" Lee

said, and winked. "Do you think she's found her way upstairs, too?"

Crossing the room, we spotted her. Her hands were clasped around the hog stubble of a large boy's neck, and they were swaying in the center of the hexagon. I waved at her, trying to get her attention, and she stared right through me. A smile played on her face, while the chandeliers plucked up the red in her hair, strumming even the subtlest colors out of her.

Grinning, Lee lifted a hand to his black eyebrow in a mock salute. His bloodless hand looked thin as paper. I had a sharp memory of standing at a bay window, in Florida, and feeling the night sky change direction on me—no longer lapping at the horizon but rolling inland. Something was pouring toward me now, a nothingness exhaled through the floury membrane of the boy. If Lee could see the difference in the transparency of our splayed hands, he wasn't letting on.

Now Clara was kissing her boy's plush lips. Her fingers were still knitted around his tawny neck. Clara, Clara, we have abandoned our posts. We shouldn't have kissed them; we shouldn't have taken that black water onboard. Lee may not have known that he was dead, but my body did; it seemed to be having some kind of stupefied reaction to the kiss. I felt myself sinking fast, sinking far below thought. The two boys swept us toward the stairs with a courtly synchronicity, their uniformed bodies tugging us into the shadows, where our hair and our skin and our purple and emerald party dresses turned suddenly blue, like two candles blown out.

And now I watched as Clara flowed up the stairs after her stocky dancing partner, laughing with genuine abandon, her neck flung back and her throat exposed. I followed right behind her, but I could not close the gap. I watched her ascent, just as I had on the lift. Groggily, I saw them moving down a posy-wallpapered corridor. Even squinting, I could not make out the watery digits on the doors. All these doors were, of course, identical. One swung open, then shut, swallowing Clara. I doubted we would find each other again. By now, however, I felt

very calm. I let Lee lead me by the wrist, like a child, only my bracelets shaking.

R oom 409 had natural wood walls, glowing with a piney shine in the low light. Lee sat down on a chair and tugged off his work boots, flushed with the yellow avarice of 4 A.M. Darkness flooded steadily out of him, and I absorbed it. "Jean," he kept saying, a word that sounded so familiar, although its meaning now escaped me. I covered his mouth with my mouth. I sat on the ghost boy's lap, kissing his neck, pretending to feel a pulse. Eventually, grumbling an apology, Lee stood and disappeared into the bathroom. I heard a faucet turn on; Lord knows what came pouring out of it. The room had a queen bed, and I pulled back a corner of the soft cotton quilt. It was so beautiful, edelweiss white. I slid in with my dress still pinned to me. I could not stop yawning; seconds from now, I'd drop off. I never wanted to go back out there, I decided. Why lie about this? There was no longer any chairlift waiting to carry us home, was there? No mountain, no fool's-gold moon. The Earth we'd left felt like a photograph. And was it such a terrible thing, to live at the lodge?

Something was descending slowly, like a heavy theatre curtain, inside my body; I felt my will to know the truth ebbing into a happy, warm insanity. We could all be dead—why not? We could be in love, me and a dead boy. We could be sisters here, Clara and I, equally poor and equally beautiful.

Lee had come back and was stroking my hair onto the pillow. "Want to take a little nap?" he asked.

I had never wanted anything more. But then I looked down at my red fingernails and noticed a tiny chip in the polish, exposing the translucent blue enamel. Clara had painted them for me yesterday morning, before the party—eons ago. Clara, I remembered. What was happening to Clara? I dug out of the heavy coverlet, struggling up. At precisely that moment, the door began to rattle in its frame; outside, a man was calling for Lee.

"He's here! He's here! He's here!" a baritone voice growled happily. "Goddammit, Lee, button up and get downstairs!" Lee rubbed his golden eyes and palmed his curls. I stared at him uncomprehendingly.

"I regret the interruption, my dear. But this we cannot miss." He grinned at me, exposing a mouthful of holes. "You wanna have your picture taken, don'tcha?"

Clara and I found each other on the staircase. What had happened to her, in her room? That's a lock I can't pick. Even on ordinary nights, we often split up, and afterward we never discussed those unreal intervals in the boarding house. On our prospecting expeditions, whatever doors we closed stayed shut. Clara had her arm around her date, who looked doughier than I recalled, his round face almost featureless, his eyebrows vanished; even the point of his green toothpick seemed blurred. Lee ran up to greet him, and we hung back while the two men continued downstairs, racing each other to reach the photographer. This time we did not try to disguise

"I was falling asleep!" Clara said. "And I wanted to sleep so badly, Aubby, but then I remembered you were here somewhere, too."

"I was falling asleep," I said, "but then I remembered your face."

Clara redid my bun, and I straightened her hem. We were fine, we promised each other.

"I didn't get anything," Clara said. "But I'm not leaving empty-handed."

I gaped at her. Was she still talking about prospecting?

"You can't steal from this place."

Clara had turned to inspect a sculpted flower blooming from an iron railing; she tugged at it experimentally, as if she thought she might free it from the bannister.

"Clara, wake up. That's not—"

"No? That's not why you brought me here?"

She flicked her eyes up at me, her gaze limpid and accusatory. And I felt I'd become fluent in the language of eyes; now I saw what she'd known all along. What she'd been swallowing back on our prospecting trips, what she'd never once screamed at me, in the freezing boarding house: You use me. Every party, you bait the hook, and I dangle. I let them, I am

eaten, and what do I get? Some scrap metal? "I'm sorry, Clara..."

My apology opened outward, a blossoming horror. I'd used her bruises to justify leaving Florida. I'd used her face to open doors. Greed had convinced me I could take care of her up here, and then I'd disappeared on her. How long had Clara known what I was doing? I'd barely known myself.

But Clara, still holding my hand, pointed at the clock. It was 5 A.M.

"Dawn is coming." She gave me a wide, genuine smile. "We are going to get home."

Downstairs, the C.C.C. boys were shuffling around the dance floor, positioning themselves in a triangular arrangement. The tallest men

knelt down, and the shorter men filed behind them. When they saw us watching from the staircase, they waved.

"Where you girls been? The photographer is *here*."

The fires were still burning, the huge logs unconsumed. Even the walls, it seemed, were trembling in anticipation. This place wanted to go on shining in our living eyes, was that it? The dead boys feasted on our attention, but so did the entire structure.

Several of the dead boys grabbed us and hustled us toward the posed and grinning rows of uniformed workers. We spotted a tripod in the corner of the lodge, a man doubled over, his head swallowed by the black cover. He was wearing a flamboyant costume: a ragged black cape, made from the same smocky material as the camera cover, and bright-red satin trousers.

"Picture time!" his voice boomed. Now the true light of the Emerald Lodge began to erupt in rhythmic bursts. We winced at the metallic flash, the sun above his neck. The workers stiffened, their lean faces plumped by grins. It was an inversion of the standard firing squad: two dozen men hunched before the photographer and his mounted cannon. "Cheese!" the C.C.C. boys cried.

We squinted against the radiant detonations. These blasts were much brighter and louder than any shutter click on Earth.

With each flash, the men grew more

definite: their chins sharpening, cheeks ripening around their smiles. Dim brows darkened to black arcs; the gold of their eyes deepened, as if each face were receiving a generous pour of whiskey. Was it life that these ghosts were drawing from the camera's light? No, these flashes—they imbued the ghosts with something else.

"Do not let him shoot you," I hissed,

grabbing Clara by the elbow. We ran for cover. Every time the flashbulb illuminated the room, I flinched. "Did he get you? Did he get me?"

With an animal instinct, we knew to avoid that light. We could not let the photographer fix us in the frame, we could not let him capture us on whatever film still held them here, dancing jerkily

on the hexagonal floor. If that happens, we are done for, I thought. We are here forever.

With his unlidded eye, the photographer spotted us where we had crouched behind the piano. Bent at the waist, his head cloaked by the wrinkling purpleblack cover, he rotated the camera. Then he waggled his fingers at us, motioning us into the frame.

"Smile, ladies," Mickey Loatch ordered, as we darted around the cedar tables.

We never saw his face, but he was hunting us. This devil—excuse me, let us continue to call him "the party photographer," as I do not want to frighten anyone unduly—spun the tripod on its rolling wheels, his hairy hands gripping its sides, the cover flapping onto his shoulders like a strange pleated wig. His single blue lens kept fixing on our bodies. Clara dove low behind the wicker chairs and pulled me after her.

The C.C.C. boys who were assembled on the dance floor, meanwhile, stayed glacially frozen. Smiles floated muzzily around their faces. A droning rose from the room, a sound like dragonflies in summer, and I realized that we were hearing the men's groaning effort to stay in focus: to flood their faces with ersatz blood, to hold still, hold still, and smile.

Then the chair tipped; one of our pursuers had lifted Clara up, kicking and screaming, and began to carry her back to the dance floor, where men were shifting to make a place for her.

"Front and center, ladies," the company Captain called urgently. "Fix your dress, dear. The straps have gotten all twisted."

I had a terrible vision of Clara caught inside the shot with them, her eyes turning from brown to umber to the deathlessly sparkling gold.

"Stop!" I yelled. "Let her go! She—" *She's alive*, I did not risk telling them. "She does not photograph well!"

With aqueous indifference, the camera lifted its eye.

"Listen, forgive us, but we cannot be in your photograph!"

"Let *go!*" Clara said, cinched inside an octopus of restraining arms, every one of them pretending that this was still a game.

We used to pledge, with great passion, always to defend each other. We meant it, too. These were easy promises to make, when we were safely at the boarding house; but on this mountain even breathing felt dangerous.

But Clara pushed back. Clara saved us. She directed her voice at every object in the lodge, screaming at the very rafters. Gloriously, her speech gurgling with saliva and blood and everything wet, everything living, she began to howl at them, the dead ones. She foamed red, my best friend, forming the words we had been stifling all night, the spell-bursting ones:

"It's done, gentlemen. It's over. Your song ended. You are news font; you are characters. I could read you each your own obituary. None of this—"

"Shut her up," a man growled.

"Shut up, shut up!" several others screamed.

She was chanting, one hand at her throbbing temple: "None of this, none of this *is!*"

Some men were thumbing their ears shut. Some had braced themselves in the doorframes, as they teach the children of the West to do during earthquakes. I resisted the urge to cover my own ears as she bansheed back at the shocked ghosts:

"Two years ago, there was an avalanche at your construction site. It was terrible, a tragedy. We were all so sorry..."

She took a breath.

"You are dead."

Her voice grew gentle, almost maternal—it was like watching the wind drop out of the world, flattening a full sail. Her shoulders fell, her palms turned out.

"You were all buried with this lodge."

Their eyes turned to us, incredulous. Hard and yellow, dozens of spiny armadillos. After a second, the C.C.C. company burst out laughing. Some men cried tears, they were howling so hard at Clara. Lee was among them, and he looked much changed, his face as smooth and flexibly white as an eel's belly.

These men—they didn't believe her! And why should we ever have expected them to believe us, two female nobodies, two intruders? For these were the master carpenters, the master stonemasons and weavers, the master self-deceivers, the ghosts.

"Dead," one sad man said, as if testing the word out.

"Dead. Dead," his friends repeated, quizzically.

But the sound was a shallow production, as if each man were scratching at topsoil with the point of a shovel. Aware, perhaps, that if he dug with a little more dedication he would find his body lying breathless under this world's surface.

"Dead." "Dead."
"Dead."

"Dead."

"Dead."

They croaked like pond frogs, all across the ballroom. "Dead" was a foreign word which the boys could pronounce perfectly, soberly and matter-of-factly, without comprehending its meaning.

One or two of them, however, exchanged a glance; I saw a burly blacksmith cut eyes at the ruby-cheeked trumpet player. It was a guileful look, a what-can-be-done look.

So they knew; or they almost knew; or they'd buried the knowledge of their deaths, and we had exhumed it. Who can say what the dead do or do not know? Perhaps the knowledge of one's death, ceaselessly swallowed, is the very food you need to become a ghost. They burned that knowledge up like whale fat, and continued to shine on.

But then a quaking began to ripple across the ballroom floor. A chande-

lier, in its handsome zigzag frame, burst into a spray of glass above us. One of the pillars, three feet wide, cracked in two. Outside, from all corners, we heard a rumbling, as if the world were gathering its breath.

"Oh, God," I heard one of them groan. "It's happening again."

My eyes met Clara's, as they always do at parties. She did not have to tell me: *Run*.

On our race through the lodge, in all that chaos and din, Clara somehow heard another sound. A bright chirping. A sound like gold coins being tossed up, caught, and fisted. It stopped her cold. The entire building was shaking on its foundations, but through the tremors she spotted a domed cage, hanging in the foyer. On a tiny stirrup, a yellow bird was swinging. The cage was a wrought-iron skeleton, the handiwork of phantoms, but the bird, we both knew instantly, was real. It was agitating its wings in the polar air, as alive as we were. Its shadow was denser than anything in that ice palace. Its song split our eardrums. Its feathers burned into our retinas, rich with solar color, and its small body was stuffed with life.

At the Evergreen Lodge, on the opposite side of the mountain, two twelve-foot doors, designed and built by the C.C.C., stand sentry against the out-side air—seven hundred pounds of hand-cut ponderosa pine, from Oregon's primeval woods. Inside the Emerald Lodge, we found their phantom twins, the dream originals. Those doors still worked, thank God. We pushed them open. Bright light, real daylight, shot onto our faces.

The sun was rising. The chairlift, visible across a pillowcase of fresh snow, was running.

We sprinted for it. Golden sunlight painted the steel cables. We raced across the platform, jumping for the chairs, and I will never know how fast or how far we flew to get back to Earth. In all our years of prospecting in the West, this was our greatest heist. Clara opened her satchel and lifted the yellow bird onto her lap, and I heard it shrieking the whole way down the mountain. •

NEWYORKER.COM

Karen Russell on "The Prospectors."





Caribbean windjammers 12 to 30 Guests, fully crewed Private charters available All inclusive

877.772.4549 islandwindjammers.com



To find a solution, you must identify the problem.

Diagnostically informed treatment at U.S. News' Top Ranked Psychiatric Hospital 855.707.0517 mcleanpavilion.org



THE CRITICS



POLITICS AND LITERATURE

BATTLE LINES

Want to understand the jihadis? Read their poetry.

BY ROBYN CRESWELL AND BERNARD HAYKEL

n October 11, 2014, according to Islamic Stateaffiliated Twitter accounts a woman going by the name Ahlam al-Nasr was married in the courthouse of Raqqa, Syria, to Abu Usama al-Gharib, a Vienna-born jihadi close to the movement's leadership. ISIS social media rarely make marriage announcements, but al-Nasr and al-Gharib are a jihadi power couple. Al-Gharib is a veteran propagandist, initially for Al Qaeda and now for ISIS. His bride is a burgeoning literary celebrity, better known as "the Poetess of the Islamic State." Her first book of verse, "The Blaze of Truth," was published online last summer and quickly circulated among militant networks. Sung recitations of her work, performed a cappella, in accordance with ISIS's prohibition on instrumental music, are easy to find on YouTube. "The Blaze of Truth" consists of a hundred and seven poems in Arabic—elegies to mujahideen, laments for prisoners, victory odes, and short poems that were originally tweets. Almost all the poems are written in monorhyme—one rhyme for what is sometimes many dozens of lines of verse—and classical Arabic metres.

Little is known about Ahlam al-Nasr, but it seems that she comes from Damascus and is now in her early twenties. Her mother, a former law professor, has written that al-Nasr "was born with a dictionary in her mouth." She began writing poems in her teens, often in support of Palestine. When, in the

spring of 2011, protests in Syria broke out against the rule of President Bashar al-Assad, al-Nasr took the side of the demonstrators. Several poems suggest that she witnessed the regime's crackdown at first hand and may have been radicalized by what she saw:

Their bullets shattered our brains like an earthquake,

even strong bones cracked then broke. They drilled our throats and scattered our limbs—

it was like an anatomy lesson! They hosed the streets as blood still ran

like streams crashing down from the clouds.

Al-Nasr fled to one of the Gulf states but returned to Syria last year, arriving in Ragga, the de-facto capital of ISIS, in early fall. She soon became a kind of court poet, and an official propagandist for the Islamic State. She has written poems in praise of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the self-styled Caliph of ISIS, and, in February, she wrote a thirty-page essay defending the leadership's decision to burn the Jordanian pilot Moaz al-Kasasbeh alive. In a written account of her emigration, al-Nasr describes the caliphate as an Islamist paradise, a state whose rulers are uncorrupted and whose subjects behave according to pious norms. "In the caliphate, I saw women wearing the veil, everyone treating each other with virtue, and people closing up their shops at prayer times," she writes. The movement's victories in Mosul and western Iraq were fresh in the militants'

memory. In the city streets, "children played with sticks, pretending these were weapons they would use to fight heretics and unbelievers." Al-Nasr celebrated ISIS's military triumphs as a new dawn for Iraq:

Ask Mosul, city of Islam, about the lions—
how their fierce struggle brought liberation.

The land of glory has shed its humiliation and defeat and put on the raiment of splendor.

ISIS, Al Qaeda, and other Islamist movements produce a huge amount of verse. The vast majority of it circulates online, in a clandestine network of socialmedia accounts, mirror sites, and proxies, which appear and disappear with bewildering speed, thanks to surveillance and hacking. On militant Web sites, poetry-discussion forums feature couplets on current events, competitions among duelling poets, who try to outdo one another in virtuosic feats, and downloadable collections with scholarly accoutrements. ("The Blaze of Truth" includes footnotes that explain tricky syntax and unusual rhyme schemes.)

Analysts have generally ignored these texts, as if poetry were a colorful but ultimately distracting by-product of jihad. But this is a mistake. It is impossible to understand jihadism—its objectives, its appeal for new recruits, and its durability—without examining its culture. This culture finds expression in a number of forms, including anthems and documentary videos, but poetry is its heart. And, unlike the videos of beheadings and burnings, which are made primarily for foreign consumption, poetry provides a window onto the movement talking to itself. It is in verse that militants most clearly articulate the fantasy life of jihad.

"Al-shi'r diwan al-'arab," runs an ancient maxim: "Poetry is the record of the Arabs"—an archive of historical experience and the epitome of their literature. The authority of verse has no rival in Arabic culture. The earliest poems were composed by desert nomads in the centuries before the revelation of the Koran. The poems are in monorhyme and one of sixteen canonical metres, making them easy to memorize. The poets were tribal spokesmen, celebrating the

102



 ${\it Jihadi poetry circulates on line and makes self-conscious use of the genres, metres, and language of classical Arabic verse.}$

103

virtues of their kin, cursing their enemies, recalling lost loves, and lamenting the dead, especially those killed in battle. The Koran has harsh words for these pre-Islamic troubadours. "Only those who have strayed follow the poets," the Surah of the Poets reads. "Do you not see that they wander lost in every valley, and say what they do not do?" But the poets could not be written off so easily, and Muhammad often found it useful to co-opt them. A number of tribal poets converted and became his companions, praising him in life and elegizing him after his death.

Arabic culture of the classical period—roughly, the eighth to the thirteenth century—was centered in the caliphal courts of Damascus, Baghdad, and Córdoba. Although most poets now lived far from the pasture grounds of the tribal bards, and written texts had replaced oral compositions, the basic features of the art lived on. Poetic metres were essentially unchanged. The key genres—poems of praise and blame and elegies for the dead-were maintained, and new modes grew out of the old material. In the urbane atmospheres of the courts, the wine song, which had been a minor element in the old poetry, became a full-fledged genre.

Contemporary poets writing in Arabic both read and translate a wide range of verse from abroad, and for

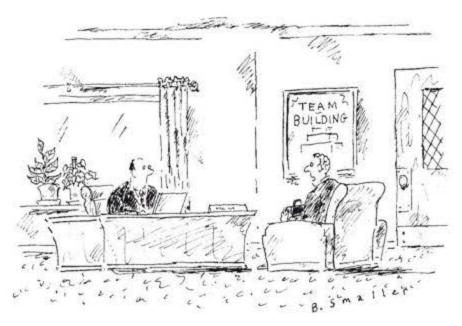
many of them free verse and prose poetry are the norm. But, though the old models have lost some of their force, there is still a remarkable continuity of poetic expression. For educated Arabic speakers, the language of the classical period is relatively easy to enjoy. The humblest bookseller in Cairo or Damascus will stock editions of medieval verse, and pre-Islamic poems are assigned to high-school students.

Furthermore, the old poetry is alive and well in the popular sphere. Among the most successful television programs in the Middle East is "Sha'ir al-Milyoon" ("Millionaire Poet," but also "Poet of the People"), which is modelled on "American Idol." Every season, amateurs from across the Arab world recite their own verse in front of a large and appreciative studio audience in Abu Dhabi. Winners of the competition receive up to 1.3 million dollars-more than the Nobel Prize in Literature, as the show's boosters are fond of pointing out. Last year, the program had seventy million viewers worldwide. The poems recited on "Sha'ir al-Milyoon" are highly conventional in form and content. They evoke the beauties of the beloved and of the homeland, praise the generosity of local leaders, or lament social ills. According to the rules of the show, they must be metered and rhymed, and the judges' comments

often zero in on contestants' technique. The show has produced a number of literary celebrities. In 2010, a Saudi woman named Hissa Hilal became an audience favorite after reciting a poem criticizing hard-line Saudi clerics. During the Arab Spring, an Egyptian man, Hisham Algakh, appeared on a spinoff show reciting several poems in support of the demonstrators at Tahrir. He became a media star, and soon his poems were being recited in the square itself.

The views expressed in jihadi poetry are, of course, more bloodthirsty than anything on "Sha'ir al-Milyoon": Shiites, Jews, Western powers, and rival factions are relentlessly vilified and threatened with destruction. Yet it is recognizably a subset of this popular art form. It is sentimental—even, at times, a little kitsch—and it is communal rather than solitary. Videos of groups of jihadis reciting poems or tossing back and forth the refrain of a song are as easy to find as videos of them blowing up enemy tanks. Poetry is understood as a social art rather than as a specialized profession, and practitioners take pleasure in showing off their technique.

It may seem curious that some of the most wanted men in the world should take the time to fashion poems in classical metres and monorhyme far easier to do in Arabic than in English, but something that still requires practice. And these are only the most obvious signs of the jihadis' dedication to form. The poems are full of allusions, recherché terms, and baroque devices. Acrostics, in which the first letters of successive lines spell out names or phrases, are especially popular. One of al-Nasr's poems, a declaration of her commitment to ISIS, is based on the group's acronym, Daesh. ("Daesh" is generally a derogatory label, and al-Nasr's embrace of it is a gesture of defiance.) The militants' evident delight in their virtuosity turns their poems into performances. The poets are making sure that we know they are poets—laying claim to the special authority that comes with poetry's status in Arabic culture. Yet behind the swagger there are powerful anxieties: all jihadis have elected to set themselves apart from the wider society, including their families and their religious



"I see myself rising through the ranks of the organization until midlife, when I will most likely hit a wall and go screaming through the door."

communities. This is often a difficult choice, with lasting consequences. By casting themselves as poets, as cultural actors with deep roots in the Arab Islamic tradition, the militants are attempting to assuage their fears of not really belonging.

The raid, in May, 2011, on the Abbottabad compound in Pakistan in which Osama bin Laden was killed also uncovered a trove of correspondence. In one letter, written on August 6, 2010, bin Laden asks a key lieutenant to recommend someone to lead "a big operation inside America." In the very next sentence, he requests that "if there are any brothers with you who know about poetic metres, please inform me, and if you have any books on the science of classical prosody, please send them to me."

Of all jihadi poets, bin Laden was the most celebrated, and he prided himself on his knowledge of the art. The name of his first camp in Afghanistan, al-Ma'sada ("The Lion's Lair"), was inspired by a line of Ka'b bin Malik, one of the pagan tribal poets who converted and became a companion of the Prophet. A large part of bin Laden's charisma as a leader was his mastery of classical eloquence.

One of bin Laden's most emblematic poems was written in the late nineties, sometime after his return to Afghanistan, in 1996. It is a two-part poem, forty-four lines long: the first half is in the voice of bin Laden's young son Hamza; the second half is the father's reply. Many jihadi poems use the conceit of a child speaker; it provides them with a figure of innocence and truthfulness. Hamza begins by asking his father why their life is full of hardship and why they can never stay in one place. The rhetoric and the mood of this opening section are borrowed from a pre-Islamic genre called the rahil, in which the poet evokes the difficulty of his journey, complains of solitude and danger, and compares his lot to that of a series of desert animals:

Father, I have travelled a long time among deserts and cities.

It has been a long journey, Father, among valleys and mountains, So long that I have forgotten my tribe, my cousins, even humankind.

Hamza goes on to recall the odyssey of bin Laden and his family: their

exile from Saudi Arabia, their stay in Sudan and their subsequent expulsion, and, finally, their arrival in Afghanistan, "where men are the bravest of the brave." Even here, though, the militants find no peace, for America "sends a storm of missiles like rain" (a reference to the cruise-missile strikes of Operation Infinite Reach, in 1998). Hamza ends with a request for fatherly wisdom.

Bin Laden's response uses the same metre and rhyme as the lines given to his son, lending the poem not only an air of formality but also one of intimacy. Bin Laden tells Hamza not to expect their life to get any easier: "I'm sorry, my son, I see nothing ahead but a hard, steep path, / Years of migration and travel." He reminds Hamza that they live in a world where the suffering of innocents, particularly Muslim innocents, is ignored and "children are slaughtered like cattle." Yet Muslims themselves seem inured to their humiliation, "a people struck by stupor." The harshest lines are directed at the impotence of Arab regimes. "Zionists kill our brothers and the Arabs hold a conference," bin Laden jeers. "Why do they send no troops to protect the little ones from harm?"

Bin Laden is acknowledging Hamza's complaint, but also explaining to him that hardship and exile are necessary. This is not only because injustice is everywhere but, more significant, because adversity is the sign of election. A core belief of most jihadi movements is that they form the last nucleus of authentic Muslims, a vanguard referred to in the tradition as al-ghuraba'—"the strangers."This is also the name of an ISIS media outlet and the title of a popular jihadi anthem. The trope has its source in a Hadith that is especially important for militants: "Islam began as a stranger, and it shall return as it began, as a stranger. Blessed are the strangers." Islam began as a stranger in the sense that Muhammad's first followers in Mecca were persecuted by the town's unbelievers, a period of hardship that led, eventually, to the flight to Medina. For jihadis, their exile in foreign lands is evidence that they are the strangers of prophecy. In fact, jihadis consider themselves to be in exile even when living in nominally Muslim states, and their exclusion from



SILVER HILL HOSPITAL RESTORING MENTAL HEALTH SINGE 1931

Adult Dialectical Behavior Therapy Program

Residential treatment for adults with poor mood regulation, impulsivity and self harm

www.silverhillhospital.org New Canaan, CT • (866) 548-4455





Kindle Books by John Alexander Scott

"Tales of Erotica and Sexuality"

"And Then There Was Light"

(A novel that revolves around undergraduate physics.)





"Since I'm your surgeon, I'll be right there if anything should go wrong."

mainstream believers serves only to vindicate their sense of righteousness.

The structure of bin Laden's poem makes the work into a drama of inheritance. Bin Laden is bequeathing a political duty and an ethical disposition. The handing down of cultural precepts across the generations is a constant anxiety for jihadis. The militants are surrounded by enemies—Arab states, rival Islamists, remote Western powers—and are on the run. Hamza asks, "Where can we escape to, Father, and when will we stay in one place?" The fact that so much of jihadi culture is online, rather than embodied in material things, adds to the difficulty of maintaining the continuity of tradition. As a result, jihadis, like many other diasporic communities, are obsessed with recording their achievements for posterity. The infrastructure of their online archives—such as Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi's "Minbar al-Tawheed wal-Jihad," a repository of religious opinions, manifestos, and poetry—is remarkably sophisticated. It is no accident that the elegy is the most common genre in the poetry of jihad: poems for fallen warriors (including suicide bombers) are a way of both memorializing significant events and giving the militants a common calendar. For the jihadis, acts of martyrdom are the building blocks of communal history. Bin Laden himself recited an elegy for the nineteen hijackers of 9/11: "Embracing death, the knights of glory found their rest./They gripped the towers with hands of rage and ripped through them like a torrent."

 Δ t the center of jihadist politics is a rejection of the nation-state. The map of much of the modern Middle East, established by Britain and France at the end of the First World War, is an enduring source of bitterness. One of ISIS's most striking videos shows jihadis destroying the border crossing between Iraq and Syria, a line established by the infamous Sykes-Picot agreement, in 1916. Other videos feature the burning of passports and national I.D.s. The "holy warriors" find a home only in failed states such as Afghanistan—or, now, eastern Syria—so the poetry of jihad promulgates a new political geography. This geography rejects the boundaries set by foreign powers and is, instead, organized around sites of militancy and Muslim suffering. A poem of Ahlam al-Nasr draws this map in a way that combines the politics of jihad with a visionary cosmopolitanism:

My homeland is the land of truth, the sons of Islam are my brothers. . . . I do not love the Arab of the South any more than the Arab of the North. My brother in India, you are my brother, as are you, my brothers in the Balkans, In Ahwaz and Aqsa, in Arabia and Chechnya.

If Palestine cries out,
or if Afghanistan calls out,
If Kosovo is wronged,
or Assam or Pattani is wronged,
My heart stretches out to them,
longing to help those in need.
There is no difference among them,
this is the teaching of Islam.
We are all one body,
this is our happy creed....
We differ by language and color,
but we share the very same vein.

Ahwaz is the Arabic name for a province in southern Iran where Sunni Arabs have long complained of persecution. Pattani is a Muslim-majority province in Thailand, where a Malay insurgency dating back to the nineteen-sixties has become increasingly Islamist. Al-Nasr's empathy for Muslims in far-flung places is a central feature of her literary persona. Among the dozens of elegies in "The Blaze of Truth," one is for a prominent Chechen jihadist and another for a Kuwaiti philanthropist. These moments of internationalist ecstasy are common in jihadi verse. The poets delight in crossing in their imaginations borders that are impassable in reality.

The Caliphate of ISIS, as yet recognized by no other country, is a fantasy world of fluctuating borders where anything can happen, including the recapture of past glories. In March, 2014, the kingdom of Bahrain declared that all subjects fighting in Syria had two weeks to return home or be stripped of their citizenship. Turki al-Bin'ali, a prominent ISIS ideologue and a former Bahraini subject, responded with "A Denunciation of Nationality," a short poem that thumbs its nose at the royals and ridicules the very idea of the nation-state. "Tell them we put their nationality under our heel, just like their royal decrees," he writes. For the jihadis, new frontiers beckon: "Do you really think we would return, when we are here in Syria, land of epic battles and the outposts of war?"

The "outposts" of al-Bin'ali's verse (ribat, in Arabic) were garrisons on the frontier between medieval Islamic states and their neighbors—Catholic Spain or Orthodox Byzantium. There are no actual ribat anymore, however. The term is an archaic flourish—like using monorhyme and classical metres. Jihadi culture is premised on such anachronisms. Propaganda

videos show the militants on horse-back with their swords in the air, flying banners, inscribed with calligraphy, modelled on those of the earliest Muslim conquerors. Jihadi poetry indulges in similar fantasies. Muhammad al-Zuhayri, a Jordanian engineer whose Web alias is "the Poet of Al Qaeda," captures this martial mood in a poem dedicated to Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, the first head of Al Qaeda in Iraq. The lines are addressed to an unnamed woman:

Wake us to the song of swords, and when the cavalcade sets off, say farewell

The horses' neighing fills the desert, arousing our souls and spurring them onward.

The knights' pride stirs at the sound, while humiliation lashes our foes.

The culture of jihad is a culture of romance. It promises adventure and asserts that the codes of medieval heroism and chivalry are still relevant. Having renounced their nationalities, the militants must invent an identity of their own. They are eager to convince themselves that this identity is not really new but extremely old. The knights of jihad style themselves as the only true Muslims, and, while they may be tilting at windmills, the romance seems to be working. ISIS recruits do not imagine they are emigrating to a dusty borderland between two disintegrating states but to a caliphate with more than a mil-

Anyone who reads much jihadi poetry soon sees that it contains a great deal of theology. Religious doctrine is the essential glue of the culture, and many jihadi theologians have written poems. Just as the poets think of themselves as resurrecting an authentic po-

lennium of history.

etic heritage, so the theologians believe that they are uncovering and resuscitating the true tenets of their faith. As theologians, jihadis are largely selftaught. They read the canonical texts (all of which are easy to find online) and are reluctant to accept the interpretations of mainstream clerics, whom they accuse of hiding the truth out of deference to political despots. The jihadis are literalists, and they promise to sweep away centuries of scholasticism and put believers in touch with the actual teachings of their religion. The elements of this scenario closely resemble those of the Protestant Reformation: mass literacy, the democratization of clerical authority, and methodological literalism. Under these circumstances, anyone might nail his theses to a mosque door.

Among the principles that militants are trying to reclaim from the clerics is the principle of jihad itself. Armed struggle has long been recognized by the Islamic tradition, but it was rarely put at the core of what it means to be a Muslim: by the twentieth century, many jurists considered it little more than a relic. For the jihadis, this attitude is treasonous and has led to the Islamic world's decline. They believe that waging jihad is central to Muslim identity—an ethical obligation and a political necessity. Some of the most compelling expressions of this view are poems.

One of these is 'Isa Sa'd Al 'Awshan's "Epistle to the Scolders." The poem was published in 2004, in "The Anthology of Glory," a collection of poems by Saudi militants who were attempting to bring international jihad to the Kingdom, attacking local Western targets and oil compounds. The regime eventually snuffed out this offensive. (Surviving members of the

group fled to Yemen, where they resurfaced as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.) 'Awshan, a jihadi propagandist and magazine editor, appeared on a list of the Kingdom's most wanted men and was killed during a shoot-out in Riyadh.

'Awshan prefaces his "Epistle" with a note claiming that, after the publication of the most-wanted list, "some of my

brothers and friends scolded me, wishing that I had not gone down this road—the road of jihad and struggle against unbelievers—since it is full of difficulties." The scolder is another figure from the old poetry. In pre-Islamic lyrics, while the speaker typically styles himself as a lover, a fighter, and a host of reckless generosity, the scolder is a voice of the communal superego,















reminding the poet of his tribal duties. As the scholar András Hámori has written, "His job was to try to prevent the protagonist from making the heroic gesture." In 'Awshan's poem, the scolders are pious Muslims who are not convinced of the legitimacy of jihad and worry that the militants are putting their communities in danger. 'Awshan explains that he wrote his epistle "to clarify the path I have chosen and the reason for pursuing it." The poem that follows is an apologia for jihad. It begins:

Let me make clear every obscure truth, and remove the confusion of him who questions.

Let me say to the world and what is beyond it, "Listen:

I speak the truth and do not stutter. The age of submission to the unbeliever is over,

he who gives us bitter cups to drink. In this time of untruthfulness, let me say: I do not desire money, nor a life of ease,

But rather the forgiveness of God and His grace.

For it is God I fear, not a gang of criminals.

You ask me about the course I have pursued with zeal and swiftness,

You ask, afraid for my sake, 'Is this the rightly-guided path, the good road?

Is this the way of the Prophet?"

Jihadi poetry often features scolders, who counsel caution and implicitly give their blessing to the status quo. They speak the language of quiescent clerics and of parental authority. In another poem, a martyr addresses his mother from beyond the grave, telling her not to cry for him and not to question his judgment. "I've left my blood behind me, Mother," he writes, "a trail that leads to paradise." The scolders serve several purposes. They allow the poet to display his knowledge of literary tradition and to create the desired archaic mood. They also function as a choric background against which the poet can strike his lonely, heroic poses. And, by questioning the advisability of jihad, the scolders permit the speaker to make its virtues clear.

Publicly stating one's creed like this is central to jihadi ethics. When the rest of the world is against you, and your co-religionists are too timid to speak the truth, coming out as a jihadi—swear-

ing allegiance to the Emir of Al Qaeda, say, or to the Caliph of ISIS—is a test of courage. The "Epistle" is full of verbs of exposure and declaration. After condemning the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, 'Awshan writes:

I announced there would be no more rest until our arrows smote the enemy. I strapped on my machine gun with a mujahid's resolve and pursued my course with a passionate heart.

I want one of two good things: martyrdom, or deliverance from despotic power.

For the jihadist, poetry is a mode of manifesto, or of bearing witness. There are no prizes for subtlety. The poet's task is to make an open and lucid defense of his faith against all doubters, at home and abroad. He must dare to name the truths that his parents and his elders try to hide. Another poem in "The Anthology of Glory" begins with a classical-sounding admonition: "Silence! Words are for heroes/and the words of heroes are deeds." Surrounded by skeptics, the jihadi poet fashions himself as a knight of the word, which is to say, a martyr in the making.

fter Ahlam al-Nasr arrived in Raqqa $oldsymbol{\Lambda}$ last year, she was given a celebrity tour by ISIS. She wrote a long prose account of what she saw, addressed to her "sisters" and disseminated through ISIS media outlets. Walking through the streets of Raqqa, al-Nasr notes that the stalls are full of fresh vegetables and that men encourage one another to follow the example of the Prophet and to stop smoking. She is allowed to cook for the militants, which gives her great joy: "Everything had to be clean and wonderful. I kept repeating to myself: 'This food will be eaten by mujahideen, these plates will be used by mujahideen." She is also brought to a gun shop, where she learns how to assemble and disassemble Russianand American-made rifles. "All this happened in Syria, sisters, and in front of my eyes!" she writes.

Al-Nasr sees the caliphate as an Islamist utopia, not only because it is a place where Muslims behave as Muslims should but because it is a place of new beginnings. To most observers, Raqqa, under ISIS, is a rigidly totalitarian society, but for al-Nasr and other

recruits it is a frontier where everything is in flux and negotiable—not only political boundaries but personal identities as well. Al-Nasr's role is an unusually public one for a woman to play in jihadist movements, but ISIS has made a point of putting women on the front lines of the propaganda war. It has also created a female morality police, a shadowy group called the al-Khansa' Brigades, who insure proper deportment in ISIS-held towns. Although media accounts of ISIS's female recruits typically cast them as naïfs signing up for sexual slavery, it is a fact that no other Islamist militant group has been as successful in attracting women. In the most recent issue of Dabiq, ISIS's Englishlanguage magazine, a female writer encourages women to emigrate to "the lands of the Islamic State" even if it means travelling without a male companion, a shocking breach of traditional Islamic law. This may be a cynical ploy—a lure for runaways. But it is in keeping with the jihadists' attack on parental authority and its emphasis on individual empowerment, including the power of female believers to renounce families they do not view as authentically Muslim.

The radical newness of ISIS society forms a strange counterpoint to the self-conscious archaism of the culture—the obsession with purity, with the buried truths of religion, and with classical literary forms. The al-Khansa' Brigades are a notable example. Al-Khansa' was a female poet of the pre-Islamic era who converted to Islam and became a companion of the Prophet, and her elegies for her male relations are keystones of the genre. The name therefore suggests an institution with deep roots in the past, and yet there has never been anything like the Brigades in Islamic history, nor do they have an equivalent anywhere else in the Arab world. The militants, of course, see no contradiction. They view their caliphate as a pure resurrection of the past. In her Raqqa diary, Ahlam al-Nasr describes the ISIS capital as a place of everyday miracles, a city where believers can go to be born again into the old, authentic faith. In the caliphate, she writes, "there are many things we've never experienced except in our history books." ♦

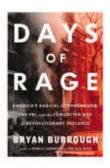
BRIEFLY NOTED



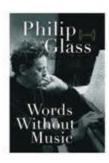
OUR SOULS AT NIGHT, by Kent Haruf (Knopf). This final novel by Haruf, who died last November, is a delicate, sneakily devastating evocation of place and character. The plot is simple: Addie and Louis, widowed neighbors in a small Colorado town, start spending their nights together, "lying warm in bed, companionably." As their relationship develops, they reveal intimate details of their lives—the death of Addie's young daughter, the infidelity that almost destroyed Louis's marriage. The story develops urgency when Addie's grandson comes to stay, following a crisis between his parents, exposing Addie and Louis's burgeoning relationship to outside scrutiny and disapproval. Haruf's story accumulates resonance through carefully chosen details; the novel is quiet but never complacent.



EARLY WARNING, by Jane Smiley (Knopf). This king-size American quilt of a novel, with fifty-plus characters and thirty-four years of plot, is the second book of a planned hundred-year trilogy about an ambitious Midwestern clan. The family members range across the midcentury political spectrum (C.I.A. agent, Vietnam casualty, Berkeley Communist) and encounter historical icons with faintly implausible frequency: one has a love affair with the Beat writer Neal Cassady, another notices Dr. Spock walking beside her at a protest. Though Smiley too often uses dialogue to tutor readers on the historical background, she has a superb ear for downhome understatement, as when a shattering death is summed up as "Just over a year ago. Heart."



DAYS OF RAGE, by Bryan Burrough (Penguin). In 1972 alone, the F.B.I. reported more than nineteen hundred domestic bombings; targets included the U.S. Capitol, the Pentagon, a Boston courthouse, and a crowded Wall Street lunch haunt. This engrossing history of the nineteen-seventies underground movement portrays many perpetrators as young idealists who "believed the country was on the brink of genuine political revolution" and turned violent to "speed the change." Tracking the movement from its origins, in the late sixties, to its undoing, in the mid-eighties, the book follows six groups, ranging from the well known (the Weathermen) to the obscure (the Family.) Particularly compelling are Burrough's accounts of the destructive lengths the F.B.I. went to in order to cripple the underground.



words without music, by Philip Glass (Liveright). Glass, a key figure of musical minimalism, was one of the first composers to reject a distinction between "ethnic" music and Western classical music, and in this memoir he explains how he came to view a composition not as a linear narrative but as progressive rhythmic sequences. Initially a student of the famous Parisian pedagogue Nadia Boulanger, with whom he mastered counterpoint and harmonic analysis, Glass went on to study the musical traditions of India, Gambia, Brazil, and indigenous Mexico. Once, early in his career, he carried a transistor radio as he travelled overland from Europe to India, tuning into local stations and hearing the music gradually change.

Incomparable senior living in Bucks County.

A unique senior living community in historic Bucks County, PA embraces the Quaker values of service, honesty, trust and acceptance. Pennswood Village features inspiring natural beauty, a welcoming atmosphere and a diverse group of neighbors who push the envelope of intellectual and cultural achievement.

Call 888-214-4626 today for your FREE information kit.

1382 Newtown-Langhorne Rd • Newtown, PA 18940 www.pennswood.org

PENNSWOOD



HOPE DELIVERED. IN HOMES, IN CLASSROOMS, IN TIMES OF CRISIS.



Feed families in need by supporting the United Nations World Food Programme, the largest hunger relief agency.

www.wfpusa.org/hope (202) 627-3737

NYC Underground Art Tours



You know there's great art above ground. But are you aware of the great art below ground? Let Us Show You.

Apple Subway Tours

AppleSubway.com



Blazer Sale

Blazers for ladies and gentlemen 15 colors, All sizes. Were \$195, Now \$170

Hunter and Coggins
Asheville, NC 1-800-343-9396
hunterandcoggins.com

HELP FOR ADDICTION



Dawn Farm offers affordable treatment for drug and alcohol addiction on a working farm. Accredited, internationally known, a unique program with compassionable care and hope.

www.dawnfarm.org • 734.669.3800



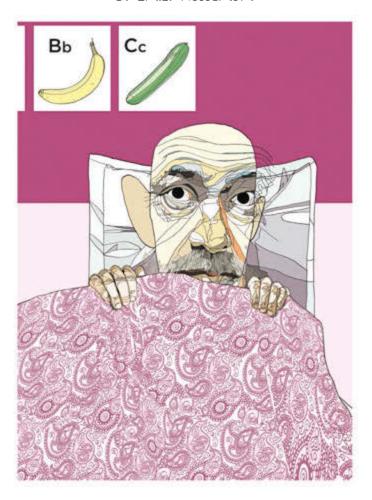
Patinated Bronze Patinated Bronze 10.5" H SoldwederSculptures con 1-800-337-8907

ON TELEVISION

WHERE THE BOYS ARE

The gay fantasia of "Cucumber" and "Banana."

BY EMILY NUSSBAUM



n his 1992 collection, "The Man with Night Sweats," Thom Gunn included a wry poem titled "Lines for My 55th Birthday": "The love of old men is not worth a lot,/ Desperate and dry even when it is hot./You cannot tell what is enthusiasm/And what involuntary spasm."

At the precocious age of forty-six, Henry Best is already mid-spasm: within a week, he's fled his devoted partner, been suspended from his job, shacked up in a loft with some Grindr-surfing youngsters, and begun mooning after one of them, Freddie, a bisexual with the frigid prettiness of a Hitler Youth. A short, bald voyeur in a sexual marketplace ruled by youth, Best (played with rancid brio by

Vincent Franklin) is the uneasy center of the British series "Cucumber" (airing in the U.S. on Logo), which was created by the showrunner Russell T. Davies as, he has said, a "spiritual sequel" to his beloved drama "Queer as Folk." Both shows are set in Manchester's gay district, Canal Street, but "Cucumber" examines what's happened in that milieu since "Queer as Folk" ended, more than a decade ago. In the same bars, older men gaze at younger ones, bewitched by a generation whose members came out in their teens.

"Cucumber"'s eight hour-long episodes are interwoven with those of two other series, "Banana" and "Tofu," the titles cheeky references to a urological scale

"Cucumber" focusses on the breakup of middle-aged Henry Best and his boyfriend, Lance.

for rating men's erections. While "Cucumber" focusses on Henry's breakup, the half-hour "Banana" (fittingly, the sweetest and the most palatable of the bunch) tells the stories of the younger people in Henry's circle, one per episode. "Tofu" is a Web-based documentary series, in which the shows' actors and others dish, with graphic bonhomie, about their sexual habits.

"Cucumber," which Davies also wrote, is the toughest series to take, but it's also the most ambitious—and, at its heights, it is emotionally wrenching and acridly funny, an audacious and original expression of Davies's challenging, often critical ideas about gay male identity. In the pilot, Henry's gentle longtime boyfriend, an aquarium administrator named Lance (Cyril Nri, a consistent standout, in a quietly difficult role), insists that they have a date night. Over a fancy meal, Lance proposes marriage. Henry recoils in disgust. And then the couple's evening degenerates further. There's a revenge threesome, followed by a violent arrest; eventually, the two men find themselves shouting in front of their straight neighbors, nearly spitting with rage, as police lights pulse on their quiet street. "You should learn to swim!" Henry screams. "You should learn to fuck!" Lance screams.

As in any midlife breakup, the men's history splits like a piñata, spilling secrets. As Lance begins telling the world, the couple's sex life consists of separate "wanks," in separate rooms, to separate porn, owing to Henry's stonewalling. He is essentially a gay virgin: like the lilies of the field, he does not top, neither does he bottom. His inner life is another matter. The show's central metaphor is the supermarket, where Henry wanders repeatedly, seething with fantasies, like Walter Mitty by way of Philip Larkin. As he rates strangers, cucumbers thwack percussively against disembodied palms.

Luckily, Henry's misery is embedded in a more varied set of stories, among them a powerful, slow-building plot about Lance, who, hurt and betrayed after the breakup, begins a flirtation with a co-worker who appears to be a fantasy top—a muscleman who alternates between homophobic insults and comeons. For comic relief, there's the puppyish Dean (the endearing newcomer Fisayo Akinade), whose habit of premature ejaculation doesn't get in the way

of his kinky adventures. (Dean also gets a great episode of "Banana," in which it turns out that he's made up a story about parental rejection just to seem interesting.) Then, there's Henry's sister Cleo and her Bieber-haired teen son, who exists in a fluid post-gay universe, where boys mess around with one another but suffer few repercussions. All these characters are united by their compulsive cellphone use, a phenomenon that barely existed when "Queer as Folk" ended.

In one of the show's best episodes, Henry goes on a date with a man he's met online, to whom he's been described—by Freddie, acting as his digital Cyrano—as a "power bottom," a submissive who controls the action. Terrified that he might have to follow through, Henry brilliantly mind-games his date, ducking the sex yet somehow leaving the man gasping, "You're the most powerful bottom I ever met!" In the aftermath, in a brightly lit burger joint, Henry finds himself drawn into a more intimate exchange, with a friendly stranger named Leigh. The two men talk about how AIDS shaped sex in their twenties ("as if sex isn't scary enough"); gripe about porn ("It makes me think that sex is for sexy people"); and engage in a hilariously manic denunciation of gay culture's focus on the ass ("What happened to the front?" Henry complains. "I like the front," Leigh sighs). It's refreshing, blunt stuff—an exchange that hints at a different route to liberation, one based in erotic generosity and playfulness, not competition. Naturally, it doesn't take.

"Cucumber" is hardly the first gay art work to diagnose a dank streak in urban hedonism, the way that self-loathing and self-love can meet like storm fronts inside one man's psyche. (The first thing we hear Henry say aloud is "I hate gay men.") In its more searing moments, the show echoes Larry Kramer's apocalyptic view of promiscuity or the work of the experimental novelist Dennis Cooper, who is fascinated by the vampiric aspect of older men's craving for young ones. Visually, "Cucumber" is puckishly content to have it both ways, with its disco musical cues and witty quickcut editing. It discerns something toxic in beauty fascism, but also lets the camera linger on Freddie, with his damaged Lolita smirk and his tendency to lounge around in tighty whities.

And yet Davies's vision is not, in the

end, cruel—it just refuses to look away from cruelty. The single best episode, the sixth, is like nothing else I've seen this year; I won't spoil it, but will say that it made me sob. It begins with a dazzling set of montages, which sum up decades in one gay man's life, a life that at once resists politics and is inevitably shaped by it. We see his first attraction, first porn, first shame, first family rejection, first love, first loss. We see him dance, smiling, alone in his house. Then, in the episode's second half, we're privy to a frightening encounter, one that we know will end badly. It's the kind of hookup the world regards as tabloid pathology, but Davies's series makes us feel the cost of it deeply—and helps us understand, with radical empathy, why the longing for freedom might feel worth the risk.

"Banana" is a more accessible production, with multiple voices only three of the episodes are written by Davies. As in "Black Mirror," the stories feel like polished fables, not precisely realistic. The characters are younger and more diverse than those in "Cucumber," although both series express their racial politics in interestingly contradictory ways. (On "Cucumber," Henry is white and Lance is black, Freddie is white and Dean is black, and the fraught question of how racial identity overlaps with "what's hot" is left unspoken—and, for anyone who finds Dean cuter than Freddie, somewhat baffling.) There's also a striking gender divide in "Banana": the gay men's stories are more sexual, the lesbians' primarily romantic.

But no demographic analysis can explain the charm and the delicacy of "Banana"'s approach, its smart use of the one-off anthology structure, which allows for real endings, many of them sweet, a few bittersweet. In one sly, O. Henryesque setup, a young black woman's adoration of an ordinary middle-aged white woman looks like stalking; then, in the blink of an eye, it becomes the key to the older woman's liberation. In another, a trans woman—played by the trans comedian Bethany Black, indelible in the role—is tormented by revenge porn, then forced to fall back on her family for support. "Cucumber" can be alienating; "Banana" is imperfect, too. But, together, the shows feel bracing, a door kicked open to reveal untold stories. •







www.fearrington.com

0



THE CURRENT CINEMA

CRACKUPS

"Love & Mercy" and "San Andreas."

BY ANTHONY LANE

ow many actors does it take to play Brian Wilson? The answer, according to "Love & Mercy," is a minimum of two. Paul Dano plays him in his uneasy prime—the period of "Pet Sounds" and "Good Vibrations," at the heart of the nineteen-sixties. The older Wilson, two decades on, is incarnated by John Cusack, who moves across

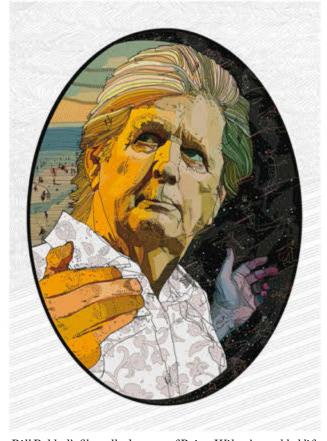
the screen in a stunned and gingerly fashion. Bill Pohlad's film, hopping between the time zones, makes room for extra Brians as it goes. A merry montage near the start shows him larking with the other Beach Boys—carrying surfboards, in the spree of their youthful fame. We also get Brian as a kid, already looking lost, and footage of the true Brian, over the final credits, singing the lean, post-traumatic number that lends the film its title. There must be more Brians out there, I imagine, calmly waiting their turn.

The hazard, whenever a story is told in two halves, is that one half tends to suppress the other. The problem was acute in "Julie & Julia," for instance, which could have dropped its present-day sequences completely and spoiled us with a soufflé of purest Meryl Streep. That is not the case with "Love & Mercy." We need the before as well as the

after, not because the vibrations go from good to bad, in a simple decline, but because chords of exhilaration and distress seem to have echoed around Wilson's head, like psalms in a cathedral, from way back. "I hear voices," he admits, in middle age. Asked when he first heard them, he replies, "1963." If there is nothing more eager than young Brian, as he checks the timbre of his kettledrums,

there is nothing more dreadful than the sight of his older self, at dinner, barking out the precise tempo at which, in boyhood, he used to get beaten by his father. In more ways than one, "Pet Sounds" was whipped into shape.

The best place to find this mixture of moods is Paul Dano's face. Usually gaunt, it fills out here into the sort of



Bill Pohlad's film tells the story of Brian Wilson's troubled life.

rounded, well-fed American mask that we associate with Charlie Brown and his collapsible smiles. Dano's demeanor in movies like "There Will Be Blood" lies on the brink of a cringe, but there is nothing wimpish in his fine depiction of Wilson, and his grin, as he gives a mock salute and falls into a pool, would not disgrace "A Hard Day's Night." It was the Beatles, of course,

who helped to jolt Wilson toward the innovations of "Pet Sounds." Having heard "Rubber Soul," he urges on his fellow band members like a charioteer: "We can't let them get ahead of us. I can take us further." The guts of "Love & Mercy," like those of his career, are to be found in the studio, and the movie is never better than when it shows him sliding bobby pins onto the strings of a grand piano to tweak the tone, or forcing a pair of cellists to repeat a passage from "Good Vibrations"—like a propeller, he insists, crying "Ka-ka-ka" until the rhythm has enough bite. It takes three hours, but Wilson gets what he wants. The fact that he is encircled by unfunky types—expert session musicians, some in cardigans and ties,

known collectively as the Wrecking Crew—only compounds the joy of these scenes, confirming his impatience with the modish and his manic quest for the new. (The other Beach Boys aren't sure. "Who are you, Mozart?" one of them asks.) Too many music biopics breeze over the hard construction work of the creative act, as if embarrassed by the taking of such pains. Pohlad, to his credit, digs in deep.

For a film about the Beach Boys, "Love & Mercy" is disturbingly short of fresh air. It's all about boxing in. We see Wilson suffer a panic attack on a plane, after which he retreats to the recording studio like a knight to his castle. (When his overbearing father, played by Bill Camp, turns up there, unheralded, it's an enemy invasion.) No image is more telling than that of a piano planted in a sandpit inside a living room; Wilson sits, puts his feet in the sand, and picks

out a tune. Similarly, in later life, he gets into a motionless car in a Cadillac showroom and locks the doors. Beside him is a saleswoman, Melinda Ledbetter (Elizabeth Banks). "My brother died," he says, apropos of nothing. "O.K.," she says, taking things gently. Outside, through the windshield, lurk his bodyguard and, much worse, Eugene Landy (Paul Giamatti)—Wilson's doctor, his

legal guardian, and, if "Love & Mercy" is to be trusted, the monster who ate his soul.

Does the film stray too far in this tale of a West Coast Svengali who doled out drugs to his victim like jelly beans? It probably does; a single outburst, in which Landy snatches a hamburger from Wilson's lips, berating him as cruelly as his father ever did, followed by Landy's explanation of his duties ("I am the control"), gives us pretty much all we need to know, yet there is plenty more controlling in store. Banks has a frailer role than Giamatti-Melinda is an essentially good woman who meets a shipwrecked person and makes it her mission to save him—but she handles it with care, never lapsing into the saintly, and the rest of this consuming film, despite longueurs and moments of trippiness, partakes of her benevolence. You feel both moved and exhausted by the distance that Wilson has to travel, musically and emotionally, before reaching the shore. That makes it, I guess, a happy ending. But then, as one of the Beach Boys remarks, on listening to "Pet Sounds," even the happy songs are sad.

In a busy week for Paul Giamatti fans, he also shows up in "San Andreas," minus a wig and plus a thoughtful beard. He plays Lawrence Hayes, a professor of geo-enormities, or something, at Caltech, who keeps telling us that our planet is about to crack like a piecrust. In particular, he warns, Californians should be getting ready to hide under the table. Somehow, though, for all his digital modelling, Hayes fails to foresee the advent of the Big One—the earth-

shaker, fated to make millions quail and gawp in disbelief.

His name is Dwayne Johnson, the only actor who looks bigger than whichever vehicle he just stepped out of, and his character on this occasion is Ray. We first become aware of his talents when he tips the hat. Sadly, this has nothing to do with white tie and tails. Ray flies helicopters with the Los Angeles Fire Department, and to tip the hat means to tilt your chopper to and fro, preferably inside a crevasse, in order to rescue a blameless blonde. Who would suppose, observing Ray at work, that he is a soul in torment? His wife, Emma (Carla Gugino), is about to divorce him, to the dismay of their daughter, Blake (Alexandra Daddario), and shack up with an architect named Daniel (Ioan Gruffudd), who owns—but, being a wuss, does not pilot—a private jet. Daniel says that he was too busy raising buildings to raise kids; also, he turns out to be a coward. Short of disembowelling a puppy, there's not much more that he could do to firm up his credentials.

The film, directed by Brad Peyton, is set at the intersection of the rift in Ray's marriage and the far less notable rift that opens up along the San Andreas Fault. Without wishing, for obvious reasons, to pick a fight with Ray, I have to question his whole approach to disaster relief. The man is trained to offer assistance, and what does he do when an earthquake hits? He scoops his wife off a crumbling skyscraper in L.A., and they hasten to locate their child, who is stranded in San Francisco. Towers tumble, citizens are crushed, and all that bothers Ray is

family bonding. He could have skipped the major terrestrial event and spent two hours in counselling. Worst of all, after his chopper is downed, our hero—a public servant, remember—steals both a car and a boat. What exactly is being held up for admiration here?

The boat is required because, in the wake of the quake, a tsunami rolls up. This is excellent news, for the flooded city has a genuinely haunted air, like an urban mangrove swamp, and also because Johnson, in a revelatory scene, turns out to act better when he's underwater. He is an engaging presence onscreen, with an affable sense of humor, but, too often, "San Andreas" flattens him like a human high-rise; the look on Ray's face as he wrestles with his feelings suggests that he is trying to recall a foreign phone number. Once submerged, however, he comes into his own, awash with decisive desperation. Do we care what happens to his daughter, or to the annoying English brothers who rush to her aid? Nope. The allure of "San Andreas" rests entirely on the calibre of its pandemonium, savored, ideally, with a brawling audience on a Friday night. Indeed, it is the kind of movie that makes me want to campaign for the serving of alcohol in leading cinema chains—mandatory beer, I propose, with shots of Jim Beam to toast the dialogue. Most of this is defiantly monosyllabic: "My God," "Oh, shit," "Go, go, go," and, for Hayes, an undeserved "You did good." Film not bad. Star is huge. Day saved. •

NEWYORKER.COM

Richard Brody blogs about movies.

THE NEW YORKER IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF ADVANCE MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS INC. COPYRIGHT ©2015 CONDÉ NAST. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PRINTED IN THE U.S. A

VOLUME XCI, NO. 16, June 8 & 15, 2015. THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028792X) is published weekly (except for five combined issues: February 23 & March 2, June 8 & 15, July 6 & 13, August 10 & 17, and December 21 & 28) by Condé Nast, which is a division of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: Condé Nast, 1 World Trade Center, New York, NY 10007. Elizabeth Hughes, publisher, chief revenue officer; Beth Lusko, associate publisher advertising; James Guilfoyle, director of finance and business operations; Fabio Bertoni, general counsel. Condé Nast: S.I. Newhouse, Jr., chairman; Charles H. Townsend, chief executive officer; Robert A. Sauerberg, Jr., president; David E. Geithner, chief financial officer; Jill Bright, chief administrative officer. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Canadian Goods and Services Tax Registration No. 123242885-RT0001.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THE NEW YORKER, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684. FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADDRESS CHANGES, ADJUSTMENTS, OR BACK ISSUE INQUIRIES: Please write to The New Yorker, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684, call (800) 825-2510, or e-mail subscriptions@newyorker.com. Please give both new and old addresses as printed on most recent label. Subscribers: If the Post Office alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within one year. If during your subscription term or up to one year after the magazine becomes undeliverable, you are ever dissatisfied with your subscription, let us know. You will receive a full refund on all unmailed issues. First copy of new subscription will be mailed within four weeks after receipt of order. For advertising inquiries, please call Beth Lusko at (212) 286-4454. For submission guidelines, please refer to our Web site, www. newyorker.com. Address all editorial, business, and production correspondence to The New Yorker, 1 World Trade Center, New York, NY 10007. For cover reprints, please call (800) 897-8666, or e-mail covers@cartoonbank.com. For permissions and reprint requests, please call (212) 630-5656 or fax requests to (212) 630-5883. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The New Yorker's name and logo, and the various titles and headings herein, are trademarks of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. Visit us online at www.newyorker.com. To subscribe to other Condé Nast magazines, visit www.condenet.com. Occasionally, we make our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services that we believe would interest our readers. If you do not want to receive these offers and/or information, please advise us at P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684 or call (800) 825-2510.

THE NEW YORKER IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RETURN OR LOSS OF, OR FOR DAMAGE OR ANY OTHER INJURY TO, UNSOLICITED MANUSCRIPTS, UNSOLICITED ART WORK (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, DRAWINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND TRANSPARENCIES), OR ANY OTHER UNSOLICITED MATERIALS. THOSE SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ART WORK, OR OTHER MATERIALS FOR CONSIDERATION SHOULD NOT SEND ORIGINALS, UNLESS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED TO DO SO BY THE NEW YORKER IN WRITING.



CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Michael Crawford, must be received by Sunday, June 14th. The finalists in the May 25th contest appear below. We will announce the winner, and the finalists in this week's contest, in the June 29th issue. The winner receives a signed print of the cartoon. Any resident of the United States, Canada (except Quebec), Australia, the United Kingdom, or the Republic of Ireland age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit contest.newyorker.com.

"Legally, we're a farm." Brendan Keefe, New Haven, Conn.



THE FINALISTS

"Any final thoughts?"

Dave Dubbe, Yorktown, Va.

"You've achieved closure." Darren Gersh, Chevy Chase, Md.

"Perhaps we should reduce the dosage."

Matthew Bartlett, New York City



ARTS & CULTURE

THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION, 11:32 am



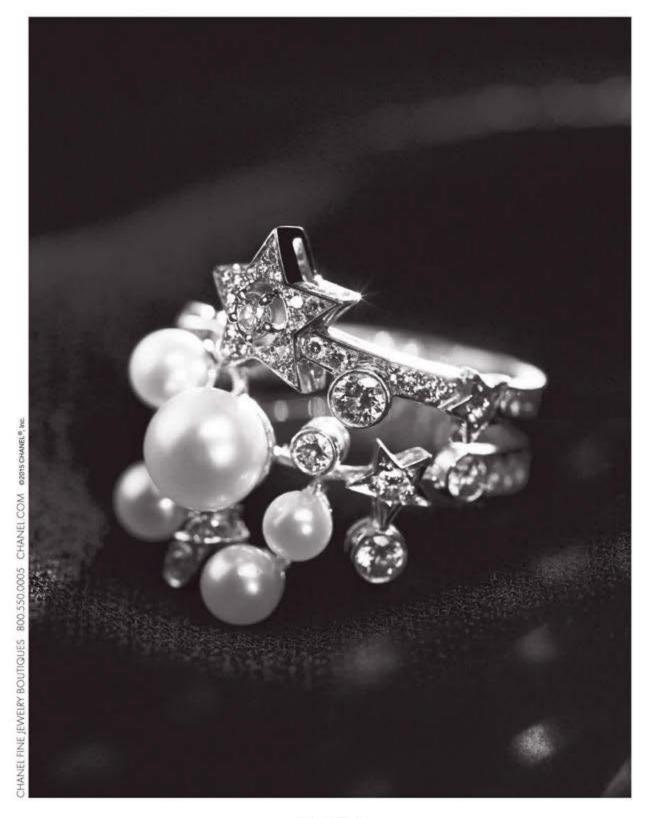


America's first museum of modern art - we got this.

Plan your visit at washington.org or call 1-888-301-7001.

CHANEL

FINE JEWELRY



COMÈTE